

COMIC.

THE FIVE CENT

# WIDE AWAY

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## MULDOON'S PICNIC.

By TOM TEASER.



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# Muldoon's Picnic.

By TOM TEASER,

Author of "Muldoon's Base Ball Club in Philadelphia," "Muldoon Abroad," "Muldoon's Base Ball Club in Boston," "Muldoon's Base Ball Club," "The Aldermen Sweeneys of New York," "Next Door; or, The Irish Twins," "Senator Muldoon," "Muldoon Out West," etc., etc., etc.

## CHAPTER I.

IT was a very luxurious apartment.

One glance around the room was enough to see that.

The walls were papered with the heaviest kind of gold paper, the carpets were so thick that the feet sank in them up to the ankles, and pictures of all sorts were suspended about.

The pictures, though, were a jumble.

A sort of artistic pot-pie.

Side by side with a magnificent Turner's, valued say at five thousand dollars, was a seventy-five cent chromo of a ship on fire, which seemed to be mutely wondering how on earth it ever got into the heavy gilt frame which surrounded it.

Seated in an easy chair, his feet reposing upon a massive marble-topped center table, a cigar of the primest Havana tobacco between his lips, was a gentleman.

I guess that most of you, if you could have seen said gentleman, would have easily recognized him.

The bald head, with its circle of hair, the red face, with its surrounding fringe of whiskers, the little good-humored blue-gray eyes, the square chin and the tulip-shaped nose, all indicated Muldoon.

And the indications were not wrong.

It was Muldoon.

The only real and genuine "ould sod."

The time was evening, and Muldoon was thinking; thinking deeply, as the working of his features told.

Just as we introduce him the door opened.

A lady appeared.

She was a gorgeous got up lady.

In fact, she looked like a combination of a sample card for a dressmaker's establishment and a show-case of a jewelry shop.

The silk of her dress was so stiff that any breadth of it would have done for a plank in a board fence, and the diamonds which flashed in her ears were almost big enough for door-knobs.

She was bare-headed, but a black lace veil thrown over

one arm was evidently destined at some later period to serve as a temporary substitute for a bonnet.

The lady was Mrs. Muldoon.

As she entered Muldoon gazed at her in surprise.

"For Heaven's sake, Bedalia," muttered he, "is it ye?"

"Shure it is," came the reply.

"Who cut ye out av the panorama?"

"What do ye mane?"

"Bedad, ye luk loike the pictture av Queen Anne that we saw at the doime museum whin we wur sparkling. Little did ye think thin that ye wud be where ye are now. Faix, there is a poil av difference betwane unhinging yesilf over a washtub and wearing diamonds."

Mrs. Muldoon's brow contracted.

"How many toimes have I tould ye not to reminiscence our early days?" said she.

"Why not?"

"Bekase most av the neighbors belave that we wur born to gould. And, Mr. Muldoon?"

"Spake on, ye placque."

"Take yez fate off av the table. Ye are not in Garrigan's bar-room now."

"Where ye have been yesilf many a toime. The fust toime that iver we met wur there."

"Ye are roight. Well do I recollect the day."

"So do I."

"Ye wur aslape behoind an ale barrel wid burnt cork all over yez face. The byes had been using ye for a dummy."

"And what wur ye doing?"

"I just came in to luk at the clock."

"That wur all."

"Yes."

"Mrs. Muldoon, ye are a fair prevaricathor. If ye only came in to luk at the clock, why did ye have the growler hid in yez market basket?"

Mrs. Muldoon's face flushed beneath its coating of powder.

She did not deign to answer the question.

"Take yez fate off av the table," she sharply repeated. Muldoon didn't.

He kept his pedal extremities, which looked like a couple of freshly polished arks, elevated upon the marble surface.

"I belave these are my fate," he declared.

Mrs. Muldoon could not deny the fact.

"This is me table?"

That too was true.

"And I will put me own fate upon me own table at wan toime, any toime and all toimes that I loike. No woman, bedad, will dictate to me; ye can't allege that I am a chicken-pecked husband"—and the speaker nearly fell out of his chair in a defiant attempt to get as much more of him, besides his feet, as was possible upon the table.

Mrs. Muldoon looked surprised at this unexpected protest from her husband, who generally was the meekest of marital slaves.

"What makes ye foire up at me that way?" asked she.

"Bekase I want to."

"I know the rayson."

"Ye do?"

"Yes."

"Thin why did you ask?"

"Bekase I felt loike it. Ye ate swate-bhreads for supper—did ye not?"

"I did."

"And dhrank woine?"

"Mumm's Exhra Wet!"

"No wondher that ye are cross. Niver, if ye live for ages, will yez stomach get acquainted wid quality food. It shows yez low origin. Now if ye had ate corn beef and cabbage and washed it down wid beer ye wud have been as merry as a lark. Arrah, but the blue blood tells. Luk at me."

"Ye are blue-blooded."

"I am, and I proide mesilf on me family."

"Then, ef yez blood is blue, I thank Heaven that moine is cardinal. Ye luk more loike a label off of a pill-box. Where are ye going?"

"To the opera."

"In the kerridge?"

"Av coarse."

"It is well plazed to hear it am I."

"Why?"

"Bekase it will save the family respectability. If ye wint on fut ye wud have a mob at yez heels before ye got to the corner. I belave that if I wur not acquainted wid ye I wud run on behoind and throw mud mesilf!"

"Terry, it is mad ye must be to talk that way," ejaculated Mrs. Muldoon. "Are ye mad?"

"No."

"Are ye sick?"

"Not at all."

"Then what ails ye?"

"I am toired."

"Toired?"

"Yis."

"Av what?"

"Me life. I have a good moind to go down to the sewer and sloide in."

"It is yesilf that should be ashamed. Luk at the luxury that ye are environed wid."

"It is that which fatigues me."

"How?"

"Ye can put a set av silver shoes upon a jackass, but that don't make him a race-horse. That is just the way that I fale. I wud rather be sitting in me boarding-house wid a red shirt on than to be here in me velvet coat."

Mrs. Muldoon held up her hands.

She was plainly horrified.

"The day moight come whin all av yez wealth wud lave ye; thin ye wud be sorry for yez wurruds," said she.

Muldoon shook his head.

"That day will niver arroive," he declared in accents of conviction.

"Why not?"

"It ain't me luck."

"Terence!"

"I mane what I articulate, Bridget; I wud be happier widout a cint, but it ain't no use; I can't lose me money. I've thried it. I've speculated in all sorts av things wid the swate hopes av going bhroke. Didn't I buy up nearly all av the peach-pits that I could get hould off? Who the devil wud think that there wur money in peach-pits at fifty cints a barrel? What wur the raysult? Some German docthur wid a name long as a tiligraph pole found out that peach-pits wur sure cures for dyspepsia. Ivery person in the land must have the dyspepsia, for such a clamor for peach-pits I niver heard av before. Wud ye belave it, I sould ivery barrel for three dollars apiece, and thin one broker wanted me to hould on for more. Mrs. Muldoon, I fale morally certhain that if I should buy a cargo av skunks that they wud come into fashion for pets, and I wud have a corner on the market. Bedad, it is me intenthion to resurrect ould toimes somehow."

Mrs. Muldoon tossed her head.

"Do as ye plaze," said she. "Ye are aquil so anything."

"Me marrying yesilf proves it," returned Muldoon. "Go to yez opera, ye kalsomined ould belle, but don't sit in the front av the box. If ye do, an' the singers see ye, they will lose their voices and the opera will bust up."

Mrs. Muldoon flung at him a glance.

It was not a come-my-love-and-kiss-me-quick movement of the orbs.

Instead, it was a how-pleased-would-I-be-to-assist-at-your-funeral expression.

Haughtily she swept out of the room.

"I wud not deign to wear out me tongue in converse wid ye," she said, as the door slammed after her.

Muldoon ironically waved a kiss from the tips of his fingers.

Then he puffed on his cigar afresh.

"There is a woman going to the opera to sit in a private cell who, twenty years ago, wor standing outsoide av it grubbing fur checks. Bedad, Bidalia is fading, ould age is telling on her. She luks loike a pictur an a Jap-anase fan more than anything ilse. And there is me chained to her side, me, in the bloom av me youth. Faix, I luk loike a bhrand new bluefish, besides the last run of shad in comparison wid her."

"Hardly had the words died away upon his lips before the door skipped open violently as if somebody had hit it with a derrick.

A gentleman came in.

The gentleman was none other but our old friend, the Hon. Michael Growler, Muldoon's brother-in-law, Senator from Nevada, and known affectionately amongst his constituents as the "Lily of Nevada."

The Hon. Mike was in full dress.

Even to a pair of white kid gloves.

Yet he did not seem happy.

His face was as black as a thunder-cloud.

He sat down upon a chair with a bounce which threatened to end the chair's career forever.

Muldoon surveyed him.

"Ye don't luk loike a winner, Mike," said he.

The Hon. Mike growled.

"Look at me," grunted he.

"The same am I doing now."

"Wot der I look like?"

"Begob, it is hard to tell," Muldoon cautiously rejoined, "but if ye came addhressed to me inside av an envelope on Valentine's Day, it wud niver rist wud I till I found out the sucker who sent it and had his blood."

"Durned if I blame yer," moodily said Mike; "do yer know wot I feel like?"

"What?"

"A dirty-footed old sow wid a bunch av hot-house flowers tied about her neck. Sure, dere's no use in talkin', dis here gilt-edge existence is a sort av palling and also appalling upon me. I wish dat I wuz back in old Nevada wid a red shirt on, a pair uv socks dat wud stick up against der wall at the fust throw four or five revolvers in me belt, an' a helpin' fer to pull on der rope dat wuz sendin' a hoss-thief ter fill an aperture in der angel band. Sure I wud be as chipper as an old buck squirrel wid a wart on his tail. Oh, fer der good old times!"

Muldoon took his feet off of the table.

He straightened himself up.

He brought his hand down upon the table.

So vigorously that the student lamp which was upon it jumped up several inches and the gas flame inside of it flickered and for a second threatened to go out.

"Mike!" he said.

"What?" Mike groaned.

"I am wid yez."

"What for?"

"Ould toimes. Give them back to me. If I war as happy now as I used to be whin I war sated in me kitchen at the ould boarding-house wid me pinny poipe in me mouth, a glass av the ould stuff at me elbow, and a passage way to spit through on the stove, I would give the half av me fortune."

"So would anybody else," said Mike, savagely. "Know where I'm goin'?"

"No."

"Out wid Mary Ann, me woife."

"Where to?"

"Reception on Murray Hill. Nice pill I am fer ter take in Murray Hill. An' it's a rain-bone-tinted old time I hev. I sits in der corner, holds Mary Ann's fan an'

skirmishes fer a water-ice about once an hour fer her. When she gits tired av pivoting she wakes me up an' we go home. Bully fun. Gimme a dog-fight."

"Roight ye are, Mike; I mane to have a revival."

"Salvation Army racket?"

"No."

"Yer ain't goin' pious?"

"No."

"Den explain."

"I mean a revival uv the good ould toimes."

"How?"

"I mane to give a pic-nic."

"Who to?"

"As many av the ould mob av me boarding-house as I can foind."

The Nevada senator's faced cleared.

His eyes brightened.

"Stag party?" he said.

"Yes."

"No women?"

"Devil a petticoat."

"No kids?"

"Not a squaller."

"All pantaloons?"

"Ivery man."

Mike looked delighted.

"Yer kin take me fer a dude hurricane dat never been over anything except a chicken-coop, an' spent its time a foolin' wid autumn leaves if yer idea ain't a good one. And say, yer ivory-topped old gorilla?"

"I hear."

"Keep it away from der women."

"Our wives?"

"Yes."

"Ye can bet that I will. Begob, if Bedalia had an idea that I were roipe for a pic-nic wid the ould gang she wud lock me up in the coal cellar till the date of it war flew by."

Here the colloquy was interrupted.

By a voice.

A female voice.

And it called:

"Mikey!"

The Hon. Mr. Growler arose.

"Hear dat sweet cadence?" dismally he asked. "Dat familiar voice touches my heart. It's Mary Ann, and she's after me fer ter go to de Murray Hill reception, and—"

"Mikey, are yez ever comin'?" asked the voice, this time in sharp tones.

With a sigh, Mike got up, pulled on his gloves so that the wrinkles would not show, and went out.

"God help der rich," he groaned, "and, Mul, don't forget der pic-nic."

A minute later the front door slammed.

The sound of wheels was heard.

"Begorra, they're off," soliloquized Muldoon. "Poor Mikey, I pity him. Thank fate that Bedalia don't take it into her head to dhrag me around. It is jealousy, tho', that exempts me, for she well knows me reputathion as a leddy killer. All the same, I will not forget me pic-nic."

And he lit a fresh cigar to help him plan out that to-be memorable occasion.

## CHAPTER II.

MULDOON was as good as his word.

He did not forget about the proposed picnic.

All that night he dreamt about it, and the morning found him more enthusiastic than ever over it.

One difficulty, though, presented itself.

Muldoon had hit upon the picnic as a method whereby he could get all of the "ould gang," by which he meant the former boarders who were with him when he ran his celebrated boarding-house.

Where were the "ould gang," though?

He did not know the address of a single one of them.

True, the boarding-house still remained, and it was a boarding-house yet, but the hash-chewers were a new set completely. All of the old coterie of grub-devourers had fled.

Muldoon became doleful as he recognized these facts.

He went up to Mike's study.

The study of the Hon. Mr. Growler was a remarkable apartment.

Around the walls were hung sporting pictures, photographs of prominent pugilists, flash cuts of highly colored young ladies not over-burdened with clothes, and interspersed were a few mottoes such as "Eat, Drink and be Merry," "Live and Let Live," etc.

A large book-case filled with volumes, the dust on whose backs depicted that they had not been disturbed for months, occupied one corner.

About were chairs and sofas; a magnificent desk was at one side, while in the middle was a superb library table.

At the table, seated in an easy chair, was the Hon. Mike himself.

His back was towards the door.

Muldoon knocked.

Mike kept his posture.

He didn't even turn his head.

"Come in," he cried.

Muldoon opened the door.

He walked toward Mike.

That gentleman sat still as a statue.

Muldoon wondered at it.

"Shure, he must be aslape ur paralyzed," he reflected. "He can't have a still dhrunk upon him so early in the A. M."

He peered over Mike's shoulder.

What he beheld made his eyes distend.

Mike was reading.

He seemed absorbed in his book.

The volume was about large enough to be, if it had wheels put on it, used for a ballast chest.

The title was very interesting.

"An Account of the Early Settlers in Macedonia," it was called.

"Well, if that don't bate cock foights," exclaimed Muldoon. "The idea av a man who couldn't tell to save his soul whin Ameriky wur discovered a-reading about the early settlers av Macedonia. And, howly smoke! if he ain't got eye-shades on!"

As Muldoon spoke Mike turned around.

Sure enough he had eye-glasses on.

They did not stay on long, though.

At the sight of Muldoon he tossed the glasses off and gave the "Early Settlers" a shove which settled them, with fluttering pages, down upon the floor.

"So it's yer, old sod," he remarked.

"Yes. Say, Mike?"

"Spit it out."

"Do ye fale all roight in the head?"

"Yes."

"Yez pulse don't flutther?"

"Naw."

"And there ain't no buzz in yez ears?"

"No buzz. Why?"

"Bekase I wor afther forming an opinion that ye wor not quite right."

"Why?"

"What manes the eye-glasses and the book?"

Mike laughed.

"That wuz a steer," he explained. "I didn't know dat it wuz yer."

"Ye didn't?"

"No."

"Who did ye think it wur?"

"A cloud pilot."

"What's that?"

"A heaven steerer."

"Will ye spake American?"

"Oh, yer as obtuse as a bull-headed, shovel-nosed, red shark wid corns on his tail. I mean a pulpit-pounder."

At last Muldoon caught on.

"It's meself who tumbles now!" he ejaculated. "Ye mane a clerghyman."

"Yes."

Muldoon looked surprised.

"What have ye to do wid a clerghyman?" asked he. "Ye don't mane to buy a church on speculathion wid the nothion av dhrrawing yez dividends out av the collecthion, ye?"

Mike grinned.

"No, sir. When I want a profitable spec' I sticks' ter faro banks," he replied. "I met dis perticular capper fer der angel ranks at der reception last night. He wanted me to shell out fifty cases for der distribution uv der gospel amidst der clam diggers on der Sahara desert. So I told him to come this morning. I thought dat yer wuz him, and so I just faked up wid der glasses and der book, struggling fer a sort uv tableau."

"But what do ye want av him?"

Mike's eyes shone.

With fun.

"Mul," replied he, "I'm a dandy ould owl dat sits on a dead limb and thinks all day, and I've got a brain as big as a barge. Know what I want him here for?"

"No."

"Didn't think yer did. I mean ter take him along."

"Where?"

"On der racket."

"What racket?"

"Der picnic."

"What for?"

"As a sorter dummy. We'll have fun wid him."

"Faix, I don't see what fun we can exude from a minister," reflected Muldoon; "it strikes me that a grave-digger or a circus clown wud be more mirthful."

"Leave der howling old sea-lion uv der dime museum alone fer dat," modestly returned Mike. "I worked in a stable for two centuries, and I know rats." With which allegorical and somewhat enigmatical utterance Mike proceeded to ignite a cigar.

Hardly had the first two or three puffs of smoke passed from his lips before there was a knock at the door.

"Come in," called Mike.

In response the erect form of Mr. Henry Huggs, Muldoon's English servant, appeared.

Doubtless a great many of our readers will recollect him, for it was he who went with Muldoon abroad.

He was about six feet tall, looked as if he had a broom-stick shoved down his back, wore solemn side whiskers and spoke in a hark-from-the-tombs-a-doleful sound tone of voice.

In his hand was a salver.

On the salver a card.

He poked the salver out with the grace of a wooden figure on an organ.

As the salver was leveled at the Honorable Mike, that illustrious legislator naturally concluded that the card was meant for him.

He took it.

A smile flitted upon his lips as he read the pasteboard.

"The Rev. Sneakaby Snuggs," was what was on it.

"It's his nibbs," informed he.

"The clergyman?" asked Muldoon.

"Yes. Huggs?"

"Yes, sir."

"Where is the gent?"

"H'in the 'all, sir, h'and the 'ousemaid has h'an h'eye h'onto the 'attract. The door-mat h'is chained," sepulchrally answered Mr. Huggs.

"All right. Fire him up."

With a bow, executed so quickly that it looked as if somebody had hit him on the back of the neck with a cleaver, Mr. Huggs withdrew.

Mr. Growler made a movement as if to throw the "Early Settlers" after him.

"Muldoon," remarked he, "dat is one uv der most jovial, reckless, devil-may-care fellows dat ever I saw. He makes me shiver. It allus seems ter me as if he'd jest been blown outer a grave. He's good as a shower bath any time. Why don't ye sack him?"

Muldoon groaned.

"Sack him! I'd foire him out av the third-story windy ef I dared," he said.

"Ye don't dare."

"No."

"Why not?"

"Mike, how long have ye been married?"

"By der calendar count five years, but real down misery five billions uv centuries," sorrowfully confessed the Lily of Nevada.

"Then," reproachfully asked Muldoon, "why did ye ax

me why I don't sack the animated sthrip av hard-tack? Bedalia insists upon him staying here. She says that it is the gilded frill to have an English man-servant. If I had me way I'd climb over him wid spoikes in me shoes."

Mike said no more.

He knew how it was himself.

Both men reveried for several minutes, till a summons at the door aroused them.

Mr. Huggs ushered in a gentleman.

"The Rev. Sneakaby Snuggs," remarked Mr. Huggs, in a funereal chant.

Now to describe the new-comer.

The Rev. Sneakaby Snuggs was tall, thin and smooth-shaven. He had little green eyes, a bulbous nose of a crushed strawberry color, fat, flabby cheeks, a sensuous mouth and an under jaw like a bull-dog. It did not need a very skillful student to note the hypocrisy and deceit which were but thinly veiled upon the man's face.

He wore a pair of well-shined shoes and a suit of clerical black, buttoned clean up to the chin, where it was met by a stiff double decker of a collar that would have made a good dam for a gutter.

In one hand he carried a glossy high hat, while in the other was a green umbrella of the latest style—latest style of 1832.

His progress into the room was made very gingerly, just for all of the world as if he was afraid of hurting the feelings of the carpet by stepping upon it.

"Peace be unto this house," he solemnly invocated.

"Thim is me opinion, too," said Muldoon. "Bedad, if there wur only peace upon the second flur front, that is me room, I wud be willing to give a good dale. The opera did not agree wid Bedalia. She woke up this morning wid neuralgia, and Bedalia wid neuralgia is about as plisant society as a whale in a fit. Shure, whin I lift the apartment she bid me good-bye wid a spittoon."

The Rev. Sneakaby Snuggs appeared surprised at Muldoon's outburst.

He looked at Mike as if to mutely ask:

"What is it?"

Mike defined the look.

"Don't mind him, doctor," he said, "der old Turk is perfectly harmless. He goes off dat way once in the while, but he comes back all right. He's my brother-in-law, Mr. Muldoon. Der Rev. Mr. Snuggs—Mr. Muldoon. Get up, yer old muffin mouth, and make a bow."

Taken by surprise Muldoon did.

Mike took a puff at his cigar.

He addressed Snuggs:

"Didn't he do it good?"

"What?" asked Snuggs.

"Der bow."

"Yes, of a verity."

"Glad yer tort dat way. It pleases me. I taught him how to do it. He kin do lots more new tricks, too. Durn me fer a gummy-eyed old crocodile wid feathers on instead uv scales if he can't walk up a ledder feet first."

Mr. Snuggs' facial expression denoted that he was not quite sure whether he had not inadvertently landed in a lunatic asylum.

He concluded to stay, though.

And he seated himself down upon the extreme end of a chair, carefully nursing his umbrella between his knees.

"My dear brother," he said to Mike, "I am pleased to see you looking so well."

"Yes, I am feeling purty good," responded Mike. "I'm as chipper as an old cock sparrer dat's found a worm."

"And after last night. Those scenes of gayety are not suited to me."

"Den why do yer go?"

"For the good of the cause."

"Wot cause?"

"Those poor benighted clam-diggers."

"Clam-digghers be domned," muttered Muldoon. "Faix, it is the free lunch for a fiver."

Mike pulled out a pocketbook.

It was bulky.

And well filled.

Snuggs' green eyes glittered as Mike opened it and counted out a number of crisp, crackling greenbacks.

"Seems to me dat I promised ter give sumthin' toward keepin' dem clam-diggers, didn't I?" asked he.

"Verily, yes."

"Der limit?"

Mr. Snuggs looked meditatively.

"It was—let me see," he pondered, "was it fifty dollars, no—let me see—was it a hundred?"

"Fifty," decisively returned Mike. "I never play more den dat fer a starter. Besides, yer see, I ean't copper no how on der clam-diggers."

So speaking, Mike counted out five ten dollar notes, which he passed over to Snuggs.

Ever see a hawk nab a chicken?

Ever see a hen collar a worm?

Ever see a bluefish grab a porgie?

Well, neither of the above three could catch their victims with the avidity that Snuggs clutched the bills.

"Brother Growler," he said, as he folded them up and put them into his pocket, "this is a deed of charity which you will never repent of. Just think how much those clam-diggers need a missionary."

"Goin' ter send dem one?"

"Verily, yes."

"Glad uv it. Dere's a good missionary."

"Where?"

The Hon. Mr. Growler indicated Muldoon.

"Dere's a noble form fer a missionary," said he, "and wot a bully missionary he would make—baked, with whisky sauce. I'd like a wing uv him myself. Come ter reflect, tho', I don't believe dat he would need any whisky sauce—he's too blamed soaked in benzine already."

Muldoon's brow darkened.

He fidgeted upon his chair.

Truth to tell, he did not like being poked fun at.

"Mike," said he, "I don't want no more av yez cellar-doive jokes. If ye cast another slur at me, I'll paralyze ye wid me boot-toe."

The Rev. Sneakaby Snuggs laughed in forced tones.

"Ah, yes, I see," uttered he, "a joke—capital! Verily, mirth indicates a clear conscience and a merry laugh is as balm to a saddened soul."

"Bedad, if Mike gets off any more such jokes, I'll balm him over the head with a bale stick," sulked Muldoon.

"Don't mind him," counseled Mike. "Don't get mad, Mul. Be a good fellow. Just ring the bell fer dat cheerful servant uv yer's. We want some sort uv sunlight in der room."

Obediently Muldoon got up.

His anger never lasted over three minutes.

He rang the bell.

Mike followed the movement with an admiring gaze.

"See how I've got him trained," he said to Snuggs in an undertone.

"Is he all right?" murmured Sneakaby.

"Don't give it away."

"Verily, no."

"He's soft."

"Soft?"

"Yes; all gone."

"Soft—all gone?"

"Kerect. Here," and Mike tapped his head with the knuckle of his right fore finger.

Mr. Snuggs softly hemmed.

"Verily, whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth," he remarked.

The above dialogue having been conducted in a low whisper, Muldoon had not heard a word of it. Innocently he returned to his seat.

A minute later it seemed as if a funeral had insinuated itself into the room.

It wasn't a funeral, though.

Naught but Mr. Huggs.

He awaited his orders.

"Wat a bloomin' old ornament he would make fer a graveyard if he wuz only stuffed and set up on the fence," criticised the irrepressible senator.

"Huggs?"

"Yes, sir."

"A bottle av wine, threec glasses."

Snuggs pretended to demur.

"No wine for me," said he. "Wine is a mocker."

"Yer hed considerable uv der old mocker den last night," slyly said Mike.

Snuggs was suddenly afflicted with a cough.

"That—ahem—was for the stomach's sake as—ahem—St. Paul advises," he at last answered.

"Dat wuz fer der stomach's sake?"

"Yes."

"Den have some wid me fer der lungs."

"You insist?"

"All der while."

"Well—ahem—I will take one little sip."

To cut matters, Huggs returned with the wine.

Not only one little sip, but two big glasses did the Rev. erend Sneakaby hide from sight.

He unbent in dignity and became very sociable.

Then did Mike propose that he should become one of the picnic party, which Mr. Growler represented was to be a highly moral, deeply cultured affair, composed especially of church members. He stated that the date of the affair was not yet fixed, but that Snuggs should be duly apprised of it."

"And—ahem—all of the carnal wants will be attended to?" asked Sneakaby, as he left to go.

"All yer kin eat, and dat yer kin stuff," assured Mike; "dere will be three caterers and four beer wagons."

"Then a blessing upon this house and all within it," huskily farewelled the Rev. Sneaky Snuggs, and with just the least suspicion of unsteadiness in his gait he was ushered out.

Mike winked at Muldoon.

"If I don't have a cartload uv fun outer dat tabernacle rooster, yer kin call me mummy," he said.

### CHAPTER III.

"Now, Mike," said Muldoon, after Mr. Snuggs faded away, "I will propose to ye the question which I come up here to ask ye. I am afraid that our pic-nic will not be a success."

Mike looked alarmed.

"Why not?" questioned he.

"Bekase I can't recollect where wan av me ould boarders live."

"Yer don't know der places av business, either?"

"They never had none, except Edward Geoghan, who used to worruk in a blacksmith shop, but it took foire and burnt down and Edward may be droiving geese for all I know now."

"Put a personal in the Herald."

"That wud be foine, wudn't it?"

"Why not?"

"Have ye no foresoight?"

"What's der personal got to do wid foresoight?"

"A good dale. Wudn't our woives see it roight off?"

Mike had to confess that such would probably be the case.

"Den wat will yer do?" asked he.

"Twur that I kem to see ye about."

Mike cogitated.

But the more that he cogitated the less his cogitation amounted to.

By and by he gave it up.

"I hain't got any more ideas dis mornin' den a bloody old rock," he genteelly expressed.

"It makes no difference," suddenly said Muldoon.

"It don't?"

"No."

"The reason?"

"I've got an idea meself."

"Yer have?"

"Be heavens, it's thtrue!"

"Give it away."

"There wur a beer saloon kept by a Dutchman named Schmidt roight over the corner above me boarding-house. I think it is there yet. All av the byes used to frequent it, and ivery wan kept a dog. I will apparel meself in me best and go there. He will know, if any wan will, about where all av the lads are."

Mike thought the idea good.

"Yer better go down there now and see the Dutchman while he's fresh and in his right mind," said Mike, "cos he's liable to have a beer intellect on him by noon."

"I belave ye are roight. Have a cigar."

"I don't mind."

"I mane for me."

"Get out, ye ould duff!"

Chuckling at having "caught" Mike, Muldoon went down to his own room, where he dressed for the street.

And wasn't he a thing of beauty when he appeared upon the sidewalk. He wore a glossy high hat, a tight-fitting cutaway coat of a greenish hue, a yellow and red-striped vest, light check pants, white over-gaiters and kid gloves. A watch-chain, big enough to hoist a safe with, crossed his vest, and he carried a modest cane that could not have weighed more than ten pounds, and was ornamented by a ponderous gold head, in his hand.

The boys at play upon the walk knew him at once. They crowded around him.

"How are you, Mr. Muldoon?"

"Good-morning, Terry."

"Going out for a walk?"

"How nice you look."

"Ain't the ould man sweet?"

"He's a darling!"

"Somebody's darling, you bet!"

"He's on the crush."

"Cheese the sweet violets in his button-hole."

Muldoon grinned.

All over.

It was just the sort of a greeting that he liked, as thirst for notoriety was one of Muldoon's traits.

"Whist! whist! ye gossoons!" he good-humoredly said. "Away wid yez! Don't impede me progress. Here is some silver for ye."

He threw a handful of loose change into the air, and laughed aloud as he saw them scramble for it.

"Buy mock-orange paste and coffee-candy dhrops," he advised, proceeding on.

In about three-quarters of an hour he arrived at the little street in the Ninth Ward where his famous boarding-house was located.

Every step was fraught with some reminiscence.

Muldoon muttered it aloud as he went along, when he came to the place where it occurred.

His monologue was something as follows:

"Faix, here is the hydrant that I knocced McGinnis McNulty over for insinuating that me woife meant to elope wid the gimp-eyed postman. This is the three that I cloimbed up to rescue Roger's, me son's, kite from, and out av which I fell. Bedad, I wur confounded to me bed for six wakes, but I saved the kite."

"Here is the corner grocery, but a new man kapes it; and here is the Chinese laundry. It sames but yisther-day that we threw Kerrigan's bull-dog through the fan-loight whin the haythins wur all aslape. The dog done good wurruk. Not wan av the moon-eyes could appear against us at the coort the nixt morning. The rayson wur that ivery man av them wur in the hospital."

"Roight adjacint used to be the barber shop kept by Guiseppe, the Italian. Guiseppe wur a crank. Whin the byes burnt up his barber pole on electhion noight in honor av me elevathion to the office av mayor—I mane aldherman—he actually sued me for damages. A man as mane as that should be dhrove out av the town."

"Bedad, this cellar way seems familiar."

"Shure, I recollects it now."

"It war down it I fell at the noight av Peg Donohue's wedding, and whoile me woife had half av the city searching for me wid torches, there I war in a big slape on the lower step. Begob, that shows the conthrary nathure av a woman. All noight, I wus tould aftherwards, Bedalia had been gnashing av her teeth and callin' me 'darlint,' 'lost rose bud,' 'idol av me heart,' an' such like candy shop epithets. And whin I did get home, the first thing that she did was to lay me out wid a flat iron and tell me to get out av the house and—"

By this time he had arrived at a point opposite the beer saloon of which he was in search.

He peered eagerly across the way as if he half expected to find out that that, also, had passed into new hands.

No. It was the same as before.

The same dingy windows, half curtained, with a few withered plants in the lower portion, the same brown door which bore marks of sundry kicks from belated revelers, and the same creaking sign, suspended across the walk:

"Gustavus Schmitt, Wein and Lager Bier!"

"Shure, there is wan ould trade-mark left," joyously exclaimed Muldoon.

He crossed the roadway.

He pushed open the battered door, as he done many times before in the days of auld lang syne, and entered.

A quick glance, and it was plainly to be seen that he was more than pleased.

"Nothing changed at all," he cried; "there wur the bar where it always wur; there's the refrigerathor; there's the kerosene lamps stuck in brackets; there's the same ould sand upon the floor, and be my sowl, if there ain't Schmitt himself aslape beyant the stove."

Sure enough, a fat German, with a head as bare as the knob of an umbrella, reposed comfortably in a chair with his eyes shut and his hands folded placidly over a fat stomach.

This was Mr. Gustavus Schmitt.

Muldoon crept close up to him.

"I will wake him up gently," he said.

Some people might have thought that the mode of awakening adopted by Muldoon was gentle and others might not.

It had the merit, though, of being very simple.

It consisted simply of pulling Mr. Schmitt's chair from under him.

Bang!

Mr. Schmitt fell to the floor with a thud which fairly shook the flies off of the wall. One could tell by the tone of the fall that the man wasn't a fairy.

He was thoroughly aroused from his sleep, though.

"Vat loafer done dat?" he cried. "By Pismarck, I'll break his head mit mein foot."

Muldoon had skipped behind him.

"Shut up, Dutchy," he cried as he cautiously put the big stove between him and Mr. Schmitt so that the latter could not see him.

Mr. Schmitt got up.

Very slowly and with a whale-like grace.

"Vot's dat?" asked he.

"Shut up, Dutchy."

"Who calls me Dutchy?"

"Ask yez mouth."

Mr. Schmitt's face grew red.

Red as the most popular style of chest protectors.

A poker lay upon the floor.

He grabbed it.

Thus armed he felt valiant.

"I know where you ain't," he shouted.

"Where?" asked Muldoon.

"In dot rear py dot stove."

"Ye loi!"

"I wot?"

"Loi! loi! loi!"

If Mr. Schmitt was mad before he was madder now.

"Py Gott! I break your gums mit dot boker," he ejaculated, as he made a wild dash for the unseen tormentor.

Muldoon wasn't there.

Chasing anyboddy around a stove is about as satisfactory to the pursuer as chasing a squirrel around a tree.

"Why don't ye catch me?" taunted Muldoon.

The burly German tried.

His efforts were uncrowned with success.

At last he fairly puffed with rage.

"Shiminy grashus," he yelled. "I kicks der stove down all mit pieces."

As he spoke he gave the venerable fire-container, which looked as if it had been used to warm the animals in the ark, a kick which made it totter and almost fall.

As it was, the kick partially disjointed a section of stove-pipe and sent a shower of dirt and dust down over Muldoon.

Muldoon began to think that the joke had gone far enough.

He took off his hat and looked at it.

"Bedad! I belave that it is ruint," he dolefully muttered, "and it wur but yesterday that I had it stove-polished for fifty cents whoile I waited."

Trying to brush the dirt from his hat he forgot about Mr. Schmitt.

That gentleman, tho', didn't mean to be forgotten.

He came flying around the stove like an allegory of wrath.

The poker was uplifted.

A second more and it would probably have descended upon the unprotected head of Muldoon.

But it didn't.

Mr. Schmitt caught sight of Muldoon's face.

He uttered an exclamation.

The poker dropped from his grasp.

And Mr. Schmitt himself dropped into a chair.

He seemed like one all broken up with surprise.

"Yankee Toodle Tandy, vos I alife or in mein sleep?" exclaimed he. "If it vosn't Muldoon I vos as no goot und mein wife's name vos Dennis mit a pig 'D.'"

Muldoon grinned.

He also took a chair.

"So ye remember me?" he asked.

"I should dinks dot I do," replied Mr. Schmitt. "You

vos Muldoon dot der poarding-house kept down der street. I remember you."

As Mr. Schmitt owned to the recollection of Muldoon he pulled out a dirty, cover-discolored, dog-eared book.

He opened it and thumbed over its pages.

Presently he came to the page of which he was in search.

He read the notes upon it aloud.

"M—M—Murphy, dot veller mit a stye on his nose, four peers und dwo cigars—dirty cents. McGill, dot lives pack mit der alley, von pottle glaret—he vos drunk when he got id must be, or vhy ein Irishman puy glaret?—fifty cents. Mullen, der shoemaker, four peers, five peers, four peers, 'six peers, sefen peers, four peers, porrowed cash den cents—dotal, vun tollar sixty cents; but he vas goot for id. McLanty, dot got vun hip plowed off mit a blast, seven peers, but dot is marked paid. McCullen, McMoor—now I vos got id!"

An expression of satisfaction stole over the broad visage of the beer saloon-keeper.

"Here id vos!" said he.

"What?" queried Muldoon.

"Vun of der dings dot I recollect you py. Listen: Muldoon vot keebs der hash-house, vun whisky, dwo whiskies, dree whiskies, sixteen cigars. You vos full as a goat der night dot you ordered dem cigars, und you put dem in your pistol bocket. Mein Gott! vot a vaste of tobacco, for you sat down on dem, und when you got ub dey vos like ground coffee. Let's see vot else. Oh! Sefen more whiskies. Dot vos dwo tollars ninety cents, und der pill vos not paid. I subbose dot you vent avay so slow dot you forgot all apoud id."

Muldoon looked confused.

But only for a minute.

"It is a foine man ye are," said he.

"I fladder meinself dot I vos not pad built," innocently returned Mr. Schmitt, as he glanced complacently at a picture of himself arrayed in a Schutzen Corps uniform which beamed at him from over the bar.

"I wur not spaking physically."

"How den?"

"Ironically."

Mr. Schmitt looked puzzled.

"Say id slow," requested he.

"Say what?"

"Dot vord."

"Ironically?"

"Yaw."

"Well, I said it."

"But vot id mean? Some of dose Irish words vos vunce in der while sdick a Cherman."

"It manes," informed Muldoon, "that I consider it very agreeable av yez whin I come down from Murray Hill to see ye and to talk over ould toimes, and perhaps spind a thousand or so dollars over yez bar, for ye to bhring up a palthry bill av two dollars and noinety cints. Nixt ye will be sinding me in a bill for the use av yez room to breathe in."

Mr. Schmitt seemed suitably downcast at this rebuke.

"I vos meant no harm," he said. "Peezness before bleasure, don't id?"

"I thought so, and it wor lucky for ye that I tuk it that way."

"Vhy?"

"Bekase if I had an idea that ye meant offensive are ye aware av what I wud have done?"

"Vat?"

"Used yez as an instrument to droive the bung out av wan av yez own beer barrels. 'Tis a blossom av wrath am I whin suitably aroused. Here is yez dhross."

Muldoon pulled out a pocket-book about the size of a balloon and from a wad of bank notes took out three crisp one dollar bills.

"There ye are," said he. "Niver moind the change."

Mr. Schmitt was profuse in apologies.

Muldoon checked him.

"That wor all roight," he said. "Yez ignorance av the laws av upper-crust society makes ye excusable. A threue gentleman niver pays his debts. Bring me a gallon or so av beer, and we will retoire to the back room. Begob, well I know it. Is the round table there yet?"

"The valnut vun?"

"Yes."

"It vos."

"Thin I will raycognoize another ould friend. Many a noight whin fatigued wid too much over-exerthion a-dhrinking av yez bad whiskey have I slept undher it wid the flure for a bed and wan av its legs for a pillow."

With which remark Muldoon went into the little back room.

He sat down at the table mentioned and lit a cigar.

Mr. Schmitt went for the beer.

He soon returned with it.

The two sat down, and two glasses were filled with the foaming Teutonic beverage.

Muldoon took a cigar out of his pocket.

It was one of those tin-foiled, red and blue paper belly band cigars.

He handed it to Mr. Schmitt.

"There wur a fifty-center," he remarked, "but smoke it slow."

"Vot for?"

"For the sake av our personal safety."

"Vat you means?"

"I am smoking a fifty-center."

"Yaw."

"And ye are loighting wan now."

"Yaw."

"Well, this room is used to only foive cint Muddaguttas. Whin it begins to be filled wid a whole dollar's worth av aroma nicotine the atmosphere is loiable to explode. Av course ye follow me course av argument?"

Of course Mr. Schmitt didn't.

He had about as much idea of what Muldoon was talking about as he would have had if Muldoon had couched his conversation in choice Chinese.

He did not intend, though, to reveal his ignorance.

So with an air of deep conviction he answered:

"Yaw."

Muldoon felt pleased at Mr. Schmitt's supposed understanding of his sentence.

Truth to tell, he didn't know what it meant himself.

That often occurred to Muldoon.

He would start upon some high flown phraseology, get stuck in the middle of a sentence, and wallow desperately through it, like to a man floundering out of a mud bog.

"Now we will talk about what I came to see ye for," said Muldoon.

"I vas villing," began Mr. Schmitt.

Just then there came a loud rap at the bar outside.

A voice exclaimed:

"Here, Boniface. Hie thee hither."

A cloud came over Mr. Schmitt's face.

"Vait a minute," he said to Muldoon. "I vill be in in a leedle while. I dink I know dot voice; und if id vos der chump dot I dink it vos I pounce himoud gwick!"

#### CHAPTER IV.

MR. SCHMITT proceeded to the bar.

Leaning against it was a gentleman.

At least a gentleman probably in his own estimation.

Probably, tho', in the eyes of others the appellation would be doubtful.

His personal appearance, giving them every show, would not have entitled him to be placed in a gallery of masculine beauties.

He wore a thread-bare black suit, the seams of which showed frequent inkings, and which was buttoned close up to his chin.

Upon his head was a high hat which should have taken the prize at any Saint Patrick's parade.

No linen at all could be observed about his person.

As Mr. Schmitt appeared he smiled.

It was a sepulchral attempt at merriment.

In fact it looked like a forced attempt at merriment on the part of a corpse.

"Landlord fill the flowing bowl—

Until it doth run over, out of them—

For to-day we'll merry, merry be,

To-morrow we'll be sober,"

he sang, in tones which reminded one of the last dying efforts of a cracked accordion.

Mr. Schmitt must have had a very savage soul.

For the music of the gentleman's voice did not seem to subdue him at all.

Instead, he looked as threatening as a thunder cloud.

"I thought so," he muttered.

"Thought what, my genial friend?"

"Dat it vas you."

"What of it?"

"A great deal."

"How?"

"I vant mein den cents."

"You want what?"

"Mein den cents."

"What for?"

"Dat whisky sewer last night."

The gentleman stroked his chin and for a moment appeared to be buried in retrospection.

"Oh, yes," said he, "as Shakespeare said—Shakespeare, the immortal bard of Ayon, or, as he was sometimes called, the Swan of Ayon, 'for the nonce, Mercutio, my memory

failed me.' Did I not put down the sordid dross for that whisky sour?"

"Nein."

"You are sure?"

"You pet."

"What a strange oversight. And last night I was overflowing with the where-with-all. Did I not receive six dollars, genuine currency, no trades, for my ode to the Sun! Let me repeat the first verse, it only contains fifty-five lines:

"Oh, planet of day that gives us light;

"Oh, planet that shines in luster bright;

"Oh, planet that fades at 'proach of night,'

"Oh, planet that—"

Mr. Schmitt leaned over the bar.

"Dat vill do," said he. "I vos not got dime to lisden to any more of such sduff. If yer sdop don't bretty gwick I vill make a pause mit a glub."

The gentlemen hemmed disdainfully.

"There is no use of placing pearls before swine," he murmured. "Give me a gin-fizz."

Mr. Schmitt looked suspiciously at him.

"Vos yer got der brice of id?" he asked.

"Ay, and ten times beside," answered the gentleman.

"Make it strong."

Somewhat reluctantly the saloon-keeper mixed up the drink called for.

He placed it upon the counter.

Quicker than a bull-terrier nips a rat, or the early bird goes for the traditional worm, did that gentleman grab the drink. It went down his throat with marvelous celerity.

"Twenty cents," said Schmitt, drumming upon the bar impatiently with his knuckles.

"All right, most mercenary Shylock," the gentleman responded with the air of a man who considered one hundred dollar notes simply as small change.

He negligently placed his hand in his pants' pocket.

It remained there a minute.

Then his face underwent a remarkable transformation.

It had been sunlight before.

Now it was shadow.

He affected to stagger.

"Great God!" he cried.

"Vot vos der madder?" asked Mr. Schmitt.

"Shades of Hades!"

"Vot of dem?"

"I am ruined!"

"Ruint?"

"Yes."

"How?"

"Somebody has stolen my pocketbook. Or else perhaps I left it in the hack from which I rode down here from the Metropolitan Hotel. The hack cannot be far off. I will run and see if I cannot get it."

As the gentleman spoke, he made a bolt for the door.

Unfortunately for the bolter, Mr. Schmitt was upon the alert.

He bounced out from behind the bar.

Before the door was reached, he had the gentleman by the back of the neck.

"You vosn't don't blay dot racket mit me for a cent," he said; "id vos too old, und too pald to grow hair over. Gib me mein dwenty cents."

"Leave go of me, ruffian," said the "gentleman," struggling to free himself from his captor's clutch; "every moment is precious. That hack now may be two blocks away."

Mr. Schmitt administered a vigorous kick to the gentleman's rear.

"Yu pet dot id vos plocks avay," he grimly said; "id vos den dousard plocks avay, dot hack, yot:yu nefer come in. Yu dinks dot pecäuse I speak proken English dot I vos not got some sense? Id vos a yarm day for yu if yu dinks so. I vos got a prain und id vos not oud of rebair. Gif me dwenty cents."

"Hound, it is impossible."

"Why?"

"Isn't all of my money gone?"

Kick!

Kick!

Kick!

Mr. Schmitt made quick time, for it only took three applications his boot-toe to boost the gentleman out upon the sidewalk.

Having got him there, the burly Teuton gave his victim a fourth kick for good luck.

It was a fine kick.

One of the best of the species.

It sent its recipient rolling over the sidewalk into the gutter, upsetting a couple of beer kegs which were ranged upon the curbstone.

With a face flushed from the efforts of this unwonted exertion Mr. Schmitt retired back to his saloon's interior.

"Dat veller von't dry no more of his chewing-gum games mit me," he said. "I vos a hard citizen, med'oud of gast iron. Lost his money mit a hack. Himmell! vot a sdeer! All of der money dot dot sucker vos got he could lose mit a bencil-case, und den id would dake a microscope to find id. But vot a fool I vos to let him have der fizz!"

Meanwhile the gentleman had picked himself out of the gutter.

He picked up his hat, which had rolled several feet away, and carefully brushed it.

Cocking it to one side upon his head he walked away with a gentleman-I-was-not-fired-out-but-only-slipped-on-a-banana-peel air.

"Ah! hal but I got the best of him after all," soliloquized he; "he could kick me all that he liked, but he couldn't kick the gin fizz out of me. It is genius that tells after all."

Mr. Schmitt went back to Muldoon.

Muldoon noticed that he seemed sort of agitated.

"What ails ye?" he asked.

"Oh, noddings."

"But ye seem agitated."

"Well, I vos a leedle pit."

"What about?"

"I vos yoost daking a leedle excercise."

"Exercoise?"

"Yaw, now dat und da last."

"On what gendher?"

"Kicking a bum oud. Py der vay, Muldoon?"

"Well?"

"You knows him."

"Who?"

"Dot bum."

"The man ye injectheth?"

"Yaw."

"What rayson have ye for the supposition?"

"He used to poard mit you."

Now Muldoon was all attention.

"Are ye aware av his name?" asked he.

Mr. Schmitt's countenance became dejected.

"I vos," he returned, "only too well. His name vos occupy der most bortion of mein slate. If id vos wrote down mid a 'Pd'—paid—behind each item I vould be aple to veer seal-skin mit der labbels of mein ulsder oser."

"What wur it?"

"The fust name vos 'kweer."

"Tell me it."

"It vos Hip-hip—not hurrah, but hip-hip—vot dey call dis animal? Oh, I vos got id now—Hibbotamus Purns. Dot vos id."

Muldoon jumped to his feet.

"Ye mane Hippocrates Burns," he said; "wad'ay the ould toimers for whom I wur upon the scint. Where is he?"

"Mingling mit der mud gudder, I vos dinks," complacently stated Mr. Schmitt. "At least id vos dere where mein last kick landed him. Yaw, I dink dot he vos dere unless he vos pecome ungonsbus und vos garried mit der tide der sewer down."

Muldoon hurried out.

"I will be back in the flutther av the feather on a pigeon's tail," he declared. "Put a paper over me glass av beer, so that there will be no floies in it whin I come back."

Out he went to the street.

He peered up and down.

Leaning against a lamp-post upon the corner he beheld the object of his visual exertions.

There was Hippocrates Burns, reclining in a Hamlet attitude, his arms folded, and a run over by a truck cigar between his octoroon teeth.

He appeared to be rapt in reverie.

And so he was.

Upon no intellectual labor, though, was Hippocrates' thoughts bent. He was simply thinking where in the world he could get breakfast. Ah! if he only had five cents. With that could he hie to some near-by gin-mill and purchase a glass of beer—satisfy the cravings of his appetite by a raid upon the free lunch counter.

Alas! he didn't have a nickel.

A suspender button was about the nearest approach to coin that the unhappy poet possessed.

"Little did I think," he muttered, as he chewed vindictively upon the butt of his Reina Darta, "that I would be in the condition of the hero of my poem—that poem which I wrote seven years ago and which has not yet been published, although I have offered it to eighteen different publishing firms. They refused it, because I suppose I was not in the ring, and the critics were afraid

of my ability. They well knew that giving me once a chance, the lurid light of my genius would pale theirs even as—even as a Roman candle knocks the stuffing out of a—out of a sulphur match. The critics objected to the first verse. How could they? Except that they were prejudiced. Nothing can be finer. It is worthy of Tom Moore.

"Only a tramp  
With a sore eye,  
On him stamp,  
Make him fly,  
Give him a cramp,  
Tho' he may die!  
Set on the dog,  
Once he was rich,  
Bang with a log;

Hippocrates' recital of his poem was interrupted by a vigorous slap upon the shoulder.

At first he thought that it was Mr. Schmitt. He half turned to flee.

A voice—a voice which he had not heard for years, the accents of which he well knew—reassured him.

Said the voice:

"How are ye?"

Hippocrates turned.

"Muldoon!" he ejaculated.

"Ivery day in the year, counting the exthra day av leap-year, too," genially answered Muldoon. "How are ye, Hippocrates?"

Mr. Burns' face lit up like a pin-wheel touched by a match.

"Never was I so glad to see a man," he exclaimed. "Muldoon, it was but just now that I was thinking about the dear, delightful days when I was a guest at your domicile. What pleasant memories come to my mind."

"Yis," chimed in Muldoon, somewhat dryly, "the memories must be very plisant. Are ye aware av the mid-night whin I caught ye lowering down yez trunk? Ye thought that ye could evade two weeks' board by the racket. Didn't I catch ye and have ye confounded in the cellar for three days till I could soind out how much I could get upon yez thrunk? And whin ye came out, from the luks av yez mouth and the diminithion av me fuel, I belave that ye must have ate at least half av a ton av coal. Yis, ye ulsthered poker, yez memories must be very plisant."

Hippocrates snickered.

That is, he attempted to, and out of courtesy we will call it a snicker.

"Like all great minds, Mr. Muldoon," he said, "you are fond of your joke."

## CHAPTER V.

MULDOON took the remark as a compliment.

"It is get off a scintheallathion av wit do I wanst in the whoile," he replied. "How are ye getting along?"

Hippocrates cast down his eyes.

"Not at all," he said.

"How is that?"

"The bad luck of intellect."

"But when we were in Europe ye married the widow."

"I did."

"She had a fortune."

Hippocrates clenched his fist.

"She did," he groaned.

"Didn't you get any av it?"

"Muldoon, I was grossly deceived. After three months of wedded inferno she ran away."

"Ran away?"

"Yes."

"Who with?"

"Her music teacher. Worse than all, her fortune ran away with her, and I—I was left. I wrote a poem about it. I heard where the fugitive pair were stopping and I sent it to her. I hoped that she would repent, and for a consideration, cash down, I would have taken her back to my arms. It was a poem, in my opinion, calculated to move a heart of adamant. It ran as follows:

"To ELIZA ARABELLA:

"What made you leave your own true love,

What made you leave your Hippy?

What made you fly from his fond gaze,

To skip with Signor Gippy?"

"I was thinking," reflectively said Hippocrates, "ef making a song out of it, four lines to a verse, and a chorus of Tra la la loo le loo, tra la la loo la lady, after it."

"If ye do, ye will be kilt," said Muldoon, earnestly. "So ye are in hard luck?"

"Metal luck. If gold mines, Mr. Muldoon, were selling for a dollar a mine, I couldn't buy a potato. Did not I have to come from Europe as a stowaway, compelled to hide amongst pork barrels and cases of shoes? And I was discovered, forced to do menial duty upon the penalty of being thrown overboard."

Muldoon was touched.

He put his hand in his pocket.

Out it came, with two bright dollars inside of it.

"Here," said he, "I will lind ye this till ye find another widow."

Hippocrates grasped the coins eagerly.

"Thanks, Mr. Muldoon," he said. "Can I be of any further use to you?"

"Yis. Come wi' me."

"Where?"

"To the saloon and have a dhrink. Ye luk as if ye need an electrifier."

"What saloon?"

"Schmitt's."

Mr. Burns looked terrified.

"I would rather go somewhere else," he said.

"Why?"

"I care not to lower myself by entering his saloon."

"Ye don't?"

"No."

"The rayson?"

"He is a beast."

"A baste?"

"Yes, sir."

"Sure, I niver beheld four legs upon him. Why do ye call him a quadruped?"

"Are you aware what he did to me this morning?"

"What?"

"Because I was not situated so that I could pay him a miserable twenty cents he booted me—ay, booted me out of his beer den."

"Perhaps his parents were pirates, and he himself a freebooter," grinned Muldoon, conscious that he was perpetrating a most awful pun. "Come wid me, it will be all roight."

Somewhat diffidently Hippocrates obeyed.

They entered the saloon.

Muldoon went first.

Hippocrates followed.

At the sight of the latter Mr. Schmitt, who was behind the bar, grabbed a bung-starter.

In all probability he would have thrown it at the poet's head had not Muldoon interfered.

"Lave down the missile," he said. "It is a friend av moine at whom ye are aiming it."

Mr. Schmitt laid down the bung-starter.

"He vos a friend mit yours?" he said.

"Yes."

"Und you vos responsible?"

"What for?"

"Dem dwenty cents."

Muldoon pulled out a fistful of silver.

From it he selected two dimes.

He gave them to Mr. Schmitt.

"There ye are!" he said. "Now Mr. Burns and mesilf will retoire to the back room and continue our conversathion."

Mr. Schmitt agreed.

In fact, he was all smiles.

Why shouldn't he have been?

There was the twenty cents which he had considered gone for good safely lodged in his pocket.

So when Muldoon, having inducted Hippocrates into the little back room, ordered a couple of beers, Mr. Schmitt fairly fell over himself in his haste to execute the order.

He placed the foaming schooners before the two, who were already seated at the table.

"Two vos company, dree vos a growd," he said, as he caught up the ten cents laid down by Muldoon and disappeared.

"Now that we are alone, Hippocrates," said Muldoon, "I wud ax ye a few queries. What has become of Edward Geoghan?"

"He's doing bully."

"What at?"

"Blacksmith yet. Got a place of his own."

"Where?"

"Down West street near Canal."

"Shure it will be aisy to foind him out. Now about Terry Rafferty. Is he doing nothing yet?"

Hippocrates laughed.

This time the merriment was genuine.

"You know what a reckless fellow Terry always was?" he said.

"Yis."

"Light-hearted and devil-may-care?"

"Yis."

"Would run all over the city for you for nothing when he would not work for five dollars a day."

"I know."

"Well, he drew a prize in a lottery—about ten thousand dollars, I think it was—and went in business."

"He in business?"

"Yes."

"For himself?"

"For himself."

"What, as a naygur minstrel?"

"You could never guess."

"As a curiosity?"

"No, as an undertaker."

Muldoon gasped.

"What are ye giving me—frost?" he inquired.

"No, sir, facts."

"He a corpse juggler?"

"Precisely."

"Be jabers, I wud just about as lave think av a thrick mule going grave digging. It wud be just as appropriate."

"Be that or no, it is certainly the fact that he has a fine mortuary store on Varick street, and does a pretty good business. You see that he stands in with a coroner."

"Ah! bedad, I must go and call upon him. Be the way, I have an idea me personal beauty has increased a good dale in the intervening years since I have seen him, and I belave that if I war to get a pair of grane spectacles and go in disgust that he wud not at first know me."

"I'm sure he wouldn't," obsequiously answered Hippocrates, who would have cheerfully assented that blue-jays had gills if such a statement had issued from Muldoon's lips.

"Then I will go see him roight away," declared Muldoon. "By the way, Hippocrates."

"Yes, sir."

"Here's another dollar for ye, and I want ye to come to a pic-nic that I am incubating."

"With the greatest of pleasure. When does it occur?"

"Date ain't fixed yet, but I'll let ye know. Where is yez addhress?"

The poet might have said anywheres.

Sometimes a park bench and sometimes a five-cent lodg-ing house, oftener the bench.

But he replied with a trace of former prosperity:

"A letter addressed to me at the Windsor Hotel will reach me," he stated.

So it probably would.

For the recompense of a drink now and then, and an occasional scrap of food, he had been for some days back helping the porter black the gents boots when the porter was rushed.

Muldoon arose.

"Good-bye," said he.

"Au revoir," answered Hippocrates.

Going out, Muldoon noticed Mr. Schmitt busy washing glasses.

"Working hard, Schmitt?" he said.

"Yaw."

"Don't you want a little playsure?"

"Danks, I vos trunk last nighd."

"I mane playsure of a different sort. Don't yer like to go to a pic-nic?"

"A bic-nic?"

"Yes."

"Vot kind—family, masonic, bolitical or demperence?"

"Nayther—a stag."

"All mens?"

"Yis."

"No vimmins?"

"None."

"Vod id gost?"

"It's free."

"Und dere vill pe peer?"

"Gondolas av it."

"Mit bretzels?"

"Crates full."

"Mein Gott! I vill be der first man mit der ground ubon. Who vas der sucker?"

"What sucker?"

"The von dot gets der bic-nic down?"

"Me."

Mr. Schmitt looked confused for a minute.

He hurried to apologetically say:

"Oh, I see how id ain't, now. Id vas a bprivate affair. All shentlemans invadition. When it off comes?"

"I will sind me valet to let ye know," said Muldoon.

"Tra loo!"

"Goot days."

Lighting a fresh cigar, Muldoon started out to find a store where green glasses were sold.

Hardly had he left before Hippocrates Burns swaggered in from the little back room with the air of a man who had just bought Central Park, and meant to build a wall around it so that nobody could play in it but himself.

He glared fiercely at Mr. Schmitt and clinked his three dollars together in his hand.

"Base, sordid Falstaff," he uttered, "were it not for your treatment of me this morning, every cent, every sou markee of the hundred gold pieces that I now possess would I have spent in your place. But now, no. I will go across the street to Bumgilder's, and ask the whole house up."

Mr. Schmitt was as avaricious as all of his class.

Besides he loved Bumgilder about as much as Saul did David.

"Mein tear Mr. Purns," began he.

"Growler, don't."

"I vant to exblain."

"You cannot. As I said in my beautiful poem, 'The Stolen Stone Cutter':

"To his surprise, his explanation  
Did but add to his darnation,  
With cheeks as red as a carnation  
He took a drop on his explanation."

"Put, Mr. Purns—"

"Peace, fellow."

"I dink lods of you."

"It had that appearance this morning."

"Dot vos a schoke."

"A yoke."

"Yaw. Ha! ha! I feels awful funny all of dis morn-ing, shoost as habby as a dwenty-dwo-year-oldt, I tinks. Vot a pully schoke to bretend to get some much mad and kick mein dear freint Mr. Purns oud of der blace. How he will laff!"

"Your idea of fun is akin to that of the gamin who ties a tin can to a yellow canine's caudal appendage," grimly remarked Hippocrates.

"Yaw, yaw!" shouted Mr. Schmitt. "I vos derrible funny ven I feels dot vay, Mr. Purns."

"Vell?"

"I dells you."

"What?"

"How we will seddle der whole peezeness."

"How?"

"I abologize."

"You should."

"And I dreats. Vot's yours? Dake a fifteen cent trink if you vish, I vos no skin like Pumgelder. If he vos dreating he would glub a man who dake ofer a flat of beer. I dell you as a frendt not to go mit Pumgelder's. Der am-pulance sdops dere daily. Come, vot is id?"

Poor Hippocrates was not proof to the voice of the tempter.

He accepted a drink.

Then, of course, the laws of conviviality compelled him to treat too.

The result might have been foreseen.

Two hours later Hippocrates, full as a goat, was laid out under the table, maudlinly remarking that Mr. Schmitt was the best fellow in the world, and any one who said he wasn't was a liar, to speak in the mildest tones.

## CHAPTER VI.

MULDOON soon found an optician, from whom he pro-cured a pair of blue glasses.

He put them on.

He looked at himself in a mirror.

They did to a great extent disguise him.

"Faix, I luk loike a digger for roots. Greek roots," he said, thereby meaning to infer that he presented a scholarly appearance.

Mr. Rafferty's undertaking shop was not hard to find.

Its situation was indicated within a radius of a couple of miles by posters stuck upon curbstones, barrels, or any other place of vantage, which read:

"The only Rafferty. Cheap Funerals a Specialty."

"No Hospital Locks in Rafferty's Corteges."

"Splendor, Grief and Elegance combined in Rafferty's Twenty-Dollar Funerals."

"Oh, Death where is your Sting? Three carriages and a hearse for Twenty-five Dollars."

"Oh! Grave where is your victory? A fine coffin for three dollars and a quarter, equal to those sold at rival establishments for Ten."

"All at Rafferty's, No. — Varick street."

"N. B.—Trade Dollars taken at par at Rafferty's."

"Bedad," exclaimed Muldoon, as he read the posters, "Terry goes at the stiff-planting business as if he wur running an assignee's sale av chape dhry-goods. He must

have developed unexpected energy since last I saw him. It is a foine switch-off will I give him, tho'." as *Jared* said

Mr. Rafferty's store was a gorgeous affair.

It had two big glass windows like a dry-goods palace.

One was filled with a tastefully arranged pyramid of coffins of all sizes and varieties.

The occupants of the other were a group of wax figures meant to represent a bereaved family at the grave of some of their loved ones. *Simola* *all because* *Imp* *and* *Me*

with the exhilarating accompaniment of "oh! oh!" die away from his lips.

His face, from bearing a genial expression, became transformed into a countenance of woe.

Lugubriously did he move forward.

"Bedad, it is Terry himself!" said Muldoon. "I wonder will he know me?"

The test was to come.

Mr. Rafferty advanced.



"Whist! whist! ye gossoons!" he good-humoredly said. "Away wid yez! Don't impede me progress. Here is some silver for ye." He threw a handful of loose change into the air, and laughed aloud as he saw them scramble for it. "Buy mock-orange paste and coffee candy dhrops," he advised, proceeding on.

Over the door was a big sign, which read :

"T. O'DONNELL RAFFERTY,  
The American Undertaker."

"T. O'Donnell Rafferty," read Muldoon; "faix, prosperity has made a dude out av him. He parts his name in the middle. I wud not be at all surprised if he wore a bang wid curled ends."

Muldoon walked in.

Dreamily reposing against a metallic case was a gentleman dressed in somber black. He had a cigarette in his mouth and he was whistling "Mary Ann Kehoe—oh! oh!" quite cheerily.

As soon as the gentleman beheld Muldoon he dropped his cigarette.

It faded away behind him in a sort of furtive way into a spittoon at his rear.

Also did the melodious sounds of "Mary Ann Kehoe,"

No gleam of recognition was in his eyes.

Muldoon perceived it.

Inwardly he was rejoiced.

Outwardly he was passive.

Disguising his voice as well as he could, he asked:

"Is Mr. Rafferty in?"

The gentleman in somber black bowed.

"He is," he replied.

"Can I behould him?"

"Certainly."

"Where is he?"

"I am he."

Muldoon pulled out a handkerchief.

It was not a handkerchief very appropriate for a symbol of grief, for it was of a canary hue with a deep purple border, but still it did well enough to weep in.

That Muldoon pretended to do.

He covered his face with the handkerchief, and his being appeared to be shaken with (probably) grief.

"It is hard for me to stand it," groaned Muldoon.

"Ye have probably met with some affliction?" said Mr. Rafferty, who, despite of all his style, could not subdue his inherent brogue.

Muldoon trembled an affirmative.

"I have," he confessed.

"Mother?"

care a cint if ye places embroidhered oyster shells instead av nails upon her coffin-lid. How wud bunches av peacock feathers instead av plumes do upon ther promenade deck av ther hearse?"

Rafferty for a minute was staggered.

What kind of a customer was this that he had come across, anyway?

Was it a crank?

Or some rich eccentric?



Mr. Schmitt made quick time, for it only took three applications of his boot-toe to boost the gentleman out upon the sidewalk. Having got him there, the burly Teuton gave his victim a fourth kick for good luck. It was a fine kick. One of the best of the species.

"No."

"Father?"

"No." "Woife?"

Muldoon bowed emphatically.

Mr. Rafferty was all sympathy.

"It is a terrible thing to lose the partner av yez joys and sorrows," he said.

"Especially yez sorrows," murmured Muldoon.

"Was she young?"

"Very."

"How old?"

"Eighty-siven, cowld."

Mr. Rafferty was surprised.

"Eighty-seven?" he repeated.

"Yes, yes. See, it wur a love match. I married her for ther boodle. But now she's gone, and I—I want to give her the bist sind off that money will buy. I don't

A moment's survey of Muldoon convinced him that of the two Muldoon must be of the latter class.

What kind of a coffin do ye want?" asked he.

"I am afraid ye will have to build wan," sobbed Muldoon.

"Build wan?"

"Yes."

"Wby, we have all koinds at hand."

"But I don't belave wan to suit my dear woife."

"Why not?"

"She wor thremendously copious."

"Fat?"

"Yes."

"What weight? We have coffins especially adapted for fat people."

"Are they av piano-box soize?"

"Not—not exactly."

"Thin wan won't do. Me dear woife wud feel cramped

in aven a piano-box. I wish that I could purchase a tunnel wid enclosed inds."

"Yez woife must have been very obese," faltered Mr. Rafferty. "How much did she weigh?"

Muldoon seemed again to be entirely shaken up with emotion.

"Six hundred and foive pounds," said he.

The undertaker's face turned fairly white.

"H—how much?" he asked.

"Six hundred and foive pounds."

"Was she a—I beg pardon."

"Well, what?"

"A curiosity."

"Not a bit. She wur a Shaker. The coffin that I wud desoire wud be about tin foot long and six broad. Can't ye have wan built fur me as soon as possible?"

Mr. Rafferty looked rather rueful.

"I am afraid," he hesitated, "that, that—"

"That what?"

"I can't take the contract for the burial av yez woife."

"Why not?"

"I don't belave that I have a hearse strhong enough to carry her in."

Muldoon's face denoted the most poignant regret.

"Couldn't yez lease a safe-thruck," he queried. "Bedad, I wanted yesilf to plant the ould fairy. I intind to have a reed band and seventy-eight carriages. Besoides there will be siveral foire companies and a couple av political clubs as walking on foot. How wud it do to have the funeral by noight and have a licensed vendher wagon wid a calcium loight in the rear?"

This speech of Muldoon's caused Mr. Rafferty to change his opinion.

He believed that he had erred at first.

His opinion had been erroneous.

Muldoon was not an eccentric.

Rather a crank.

For who but a crank would desire the presence of a licensed vendor's wagon to carry a calcium light for the purpose of casting a cheerful glow over his wife's obsequies?

His attitude changed.

No longer was he obsequious.

Instead, threatening.

"Look here, ould man," said he.

"Well?" sobbed Muldoon.

"Lave!"

"Lave what?"

"Me shop."

"I don't want it."

"Get out!"

"Where from?"

"Here."

"Why?"

"I don't want you here."

"Nayther do I ye."

"No nonsense—get!"

"Will you tell me the cause?"

"I believe that you are a lunatic."

"Ye do?"

"I do."

"Well, I am shure that ye are. Arrah, Terry Rafferty, ye bloind-in-wan-eye-and-can't-see-out av the other Turk, don't ye know me? Begob, it is tin wakes' board that ye owe me."

While speaking Muldoon had taken off his green glasses.

His face was now fully exposed to view.

Rafferty started back.

He surveyed Muldoon with distended eyes.

As if he was some ghost, arisen from one of his own coffins, warranted burglar-proof.

"By heavens!" he exclaimed as his gaze of consternation finally changed to one of pleasure, "if it isn't Muldoon!"

Muldoon bowed gracefully, while his eyes beamed with good humor.

"Ye can bet it is!" returned he. "It must be althered that I hev greatly for the bether that ye didn't get onto me. European air, I suppose, has improved me natural beauty."

"Improved it!" said the undertaker. "Ye can bury me in-wan av me own three-dollar caskets if ye don't luk worse than ever. But come along in the back room till we talk over ould times."

Muldoon was willing.

"Lead on—I follow," said he, and the two proceeded to a cozy private office at the rear of the mortuary warehouse.

## CHAPTER VII.

MULDOON accepted Rafferty's invitation, and into the private office the twain repaired.

It would be only wasting time to tell what occurred there.

Suffice it to say that refreshments, both liquid and nicotine, were served, and Muldoon came out well satisfied, Mr. Rafferty having promised to come to the picnic.

He called a cab and desired to be driven home.

As he rode along he felt perfectly at ease.

"Me picnic, bedad," he communed, "will be a success. Shure, the glories av the Centennial Exposition will fade away before it. Won't Mike be glad whin I reveal to him the raysiault av me proghress this morning!"

Arriving at the house, he went into the parlor.

He found Mike there, smoking an after-dinner cigar.

A lively and pleasant conversation of about an hour's duration ensued between the two.

\* \* \* \* \*

When Muldoon went into the parlor it was about two o'clock P. M.

At three o'clock Mrs. Growler, who was reclining in dishabille upon the sofa in her room, heard a rap at her door.

She started up.

"Who's there?" she called.

"Me."

"Bridget?"

"Yes. Open the door."

Mrs. Growler did so.

Mrs. Muldoon came in.

Mrs. Muldoon seemed agitated.

"What do ye suppose?" she said, with a gasp, as she sank down upon the sofa, which Mrs. Growler had but recently vacated.

"What?" queried Mrs. Growler.

"It almost paralyzes me."

"What?"

"That which I have just found out."

"Tell me it."

"Me husband."

"Yes."

"And yer husband?"

"Mikey?"

"Yes."

"What about him?"

"Ye can niver guess. Are ye aware av what they mane to do?"

"No."

"Mike tould ye nothing?"

"Nothing at all."

Mrs. Muldoon was so affected at the reply that she was forced to seek for her solace in smelling salts, a huge bottle of which hung at her belt.

"The deviltry av the men," she cried, snuffing away at the salts; "ye know, Mary Ann, that I wint down into the kitchen to tell the cook that the next time that she sprinkled pepper, instead of nutmeg, upon a custard pie, I wud discharge her."

"Yes."

"On the way down I passed the parlor."

"Of course."

"I heard voices, and their accents wur familiar to me. Bedad, excuse the expression, but whin I am mad the ould tongue always will come out; it were Terry and Mike talking."

"About what?"

"Niver can you conjecture."

"You?"

"No."

"Me?"

"No."

"What then?"

"A picnic!"

Mrs. Growler looked at her sister-in-law in amazement.

"A picnic, Biddy," she remarked. "What under the sun do you mean?"

"Jist what I say," responded Mrs. Muldoon. "They mane to have a picnic day asther to-morrow, at McNulty's grove, outside av the city limits; I mane the limits av the city proper, for McNulty's grove is in Morrisania. I wur there wunst wid Terry whin we wur coorting. Niver will I forget the toime. Faix, there wur a proize offered for the best leddy waltzer, and bekase I did not get it Terry knocked the man who made the award clear through the dancing platform. He wud not do it now. Instead av knocking him down he wud probably take him out and threat him to a basket av flowers."

"Oh, go ahead about the picnic," somewhat disrespectfully urged Mrs. Growler, whose curiosity was now upon the *qui vive*.

"They mane to have a stag."

"A stag?"

"Yes."

"What's that?"

"All men."

"You heard them say so?"

"Wur I not at the back av the door for nearly an hour?"

"And we are not to go?"

Once more Mrs. Muldoon sought inspiration and renewed strength in her smelling salts.

"Us go?" she said; "ye can't think what yez husband said?"

"What did he say?"

"Sez he, 'Muldoon, what a picnic we will have wid those two ould crows left.'"

Mrs. Growler's eyes flashed.

Her bosom heaved.

"Mikey said that?" she remarked, with an optical glitter which very likely would not have put the Hon. Mike very much at ease had he beheld it.

"He did?"

"He called you an old crow."

"That wur what he termed me?"

"And myself also an old crow."

"We wur both named so."

Mrs. Growler stamped her foot.

A woman's stamp of the foot seems to amount to but a trifle.

But it amounts to a good deal in reality.

"Biddy," said Mrs. Growler.

"Well?"

"They mean to leave us out on the picnic?"

"They do."

Mrs. Growler's foot beat a furious tattoo.

"Not a bit will they," she stated. "Mrs. Muldoon, ye are a woife, I believe?"

"Shure our certificate av marriage adorns the parlor," said Mrs. Muldoon with pride; "and a splendid affair it is, too. We could have gotten a chape wan for fifty cints, but Terry wud not have it. Faix, he paid three toimes the proice fur wan in gould and gilt, wid a space for our pictures in the middle. So ye mane to say that ye have never noticed it, Mary Ann?"

Mrs. Growler sniffed.

"Did I allude to marriage certificates?" she said; "I asked you if ye were not a woife. And ye have the feelings of a wife, have not you?"

Mrs. Muldoon said that she had.

Every time.

But she asked to be informed the why and wherefore of Mrs. Growler's categorical questions.

"It is easy for me to explain," said the questioned lady. "Your husband goes upon the picnic, perhaps debauch would be the better term, with mine."

"Yis."

"And it is a stag picnic?"

"All men?"

"Yes, all men, and you know what the result will be."

Mrs. Muldoon groaned.

"Yis, I do," she said.

"What will it be?"

"That if they don't spind the evening av the picnic in a

dhrunk and disordherly cell in the station-house it is home will they come a disgrace to our family reputation. It is kicking over ash barrels will Terry be, and as fur Mike, faix, he will serenade all av the neighbors wid a fusillade av bullets."

"Precisely my idea," said Mrs. Growler. "Now I will tell you what we will do."

"Stop the picnic?"

"No."

"What then?"

"Can't you think?"

"No."

"We'll go to it. We know the locality and date, and we will be there. And you bet that we won't get left."

Mrs. Muldoon looked admiringly at her sister-in-law.

"Mary Ann," said she, "it is yersilf who is a tulip blossom."

### CHAPTER VIII.

MULDOON'S conversation with Mike had been entirely satisfactory.

The picnic seemed bound to be a success.

They fixed upon the day and also upon the grove, as already told by Mrs. Muldoon.

The same evening Muldoon mailed invitations.

The list of guests was as follows:

Hippocrates Burns.

Terry Rafferty.

Edward Gerhan.

The Rev. Mr. Sneakaby Snuggs.

Mr. Schmitt.

And friends.

The "and friends" was a brilliant idea of Muldoon's.

"Let them bring who they please," he said; "we will have plinty and enough for the whole av them, even if the invited guests come wid tin friends apiece."

Mike promised to see to the getting of the grove, while Muldoon took the responsibility of the rest of the affair upon his own shoulders.

Mike started off right away to secure the grove.

Hardly had the slam of the front door announced his exit before Muldoon rang the servants' bell.

It was soon replied to.

Mr. Henry Huggs, cheerful as ever, appeared.

He stood in solemn silence before his master.

"Huggs!" said Muldoon.

"Yes, sir," answered the stiff-spined servitor.

"I desoire ye to go to market."

"Yes, sir."

"And buy chickens, vegetables and—and," here Muldoon paused for a minute, "and—and et ceteras. Be particularly careful about ther et ceteras. I want thim foine."

Mr. Huggs' face moved not a muscle.

It was as unruffled as the surface of a mill-pond during a dead calm.

"Yes, sir," answered he, "but beg pardon."

"What for?"

"How many shall Hi horder for?"

Muldoon considered.

"Say twinty," he uttered.

Mr. Huggs bowed.

"Hi will haway, hat once," he said. "Hanything helse?"

"Yes."

"Hutter hit."

"Go to the brewery and ordher a caravansary av beer. If wan won't do, ordher a couple."

Mr. Huggs bowed with the elegance and easy undulation of a wrought iron nut cracker.

"To what brewery?" he asked.

"Oh, any," replied Muldoon.

Outwardly Mr. Huggs preserved his metallic demeanor. Inwardly, though, he was shaking hands with himself.

For it so was that Mr. Huggs was aware that a certain brewer of his acquaintance would furnish him with the desired amount of malt nutriment and give him a commission upon the sale.

Another bow, flexible as the other, and Mr. Huggs was about to stalk out like an automaton when Muldoon called him back.

"Come here," he called.

Mr. Huggs obeyed.

He walked up to Muldoon with the animation of an electrified skeleton.

"Hi I am 'ere," he declared.

Muldoon put his hand in his pocket.

When he withdrew it a ten dollar bill was clasped in his fingers, and a twinkling later it was transferred into the willing palm of Mr. Huggs.

"This thing about the provisions and the beer I want kape quiet," he intimated. "It is a proivate racket av me own, d'ye tumbble."

Mr. Huggs intimated by a bob of the head that he did, and moved out of the parlor as if he was an animated rat-tan.

Muldoon sighed after Mr. Huggs had departed.

"Bedad, that son av a poker mistook his vocathion," he soliloquized. "As a salesman for a monument warehouse he could niver be aquelled. The very sight av him wud cause a man to think av early death, and request a sample av mortuary advertisement."

Tired out with the exertions of the morning Muldoon lit a cigar and laid back in his easy chair.

Pretty soon his cigar lay listless in his hand.

Presently it dropped down upon the carpet.

Muldoon's head drooped upon his breast.

His feet recrossed themselves.

Sounds, more sonorous than musical, proceeded from his nasal organ.

There was no doubt about it.

He was asleep.

He must have slept nearly two hours before he was disturbed.

The disturber was the Hon. Mike.

He came in and beheld Muldoon placidly slumbering.

"Yer can call me an old scalded cat wid pimples on my tail, if der old sod ain't wrapt in the arms of Morpheus," said he. "Wait till I revive de ghoul."

He shook Muldoon by the shoulder.

"Change cars!" he cried.

Muldoon shifted uneasily.

Still he did not awake.

"Chicago!" yelled Mike.

Muldoon fumbled in his pocket.

"Ticket—hat!" he sleepily said, and settled himself down for fresh snooze.

Mike smiled.

"Yer can call me a crusty old cockatoo if I don't wake him up now," he said, half aloud.

He bent down.

He placed his lips to Muldoon's ear.

"Hurry up! Wat'll ye have?" he whispered.

Muldoon came out of his sleep at once.

"A little whisky," he answered, as he rubbed his eyes and straightened out.

Mike gave him the grand laugh.

"I knew dat would fetch yer," he chuckled. "Well, yer old ornament fur a shootin' gallery, it's all right."

"What?"

"Wat I went for."

"The grove?"

"Yes."

"Got it fixed?"

"Fixed wid der gilt. Der grove is paid for."

"And I've done me share. I have sint a man affer all av the ateables and fluids."

"Yer sent a man?"

"I did."

"Who?"

"Huggs."

Mike groaned.

"Yer sent him?" he said.

"Yis."

"After der fodder?"

"Yis."

"And der lush?"

"Yis."

Mike groaned again.

"Why didn't yez galvanize a corpse and sind him? he asked; "he would be just as cheerful a messenger. Why der very look un him wud rot der eatables and freeze the drinkables."

"He'll come back all right," replied Muldoon, "and now that we are all prepared for the picnic, I believe that I will go up and make me toilet for supper."

Mr. Huggs fulfilled his errand to Muldoon's satisfaction.

He reported that the food and drink would be at McNulty's Grove upon the day of the picnic, sure.

The night before the festive affair the Hon. Mike strolled into his wife's room with an assumed air of carelessness.

"Mary Ann," said he.

"Well," she remarked.

"I've got to go 'way early to-morrow."

"Where?"

"Oh, bus'ness."

"Stocks," vaguely said the Hon. Mike. "Yes, stocks," and pleased at the excuse, he repeated it again.

"All right," and Mrs. Growler, with an indifferent air, went on undressing, for she was preparing to retire for the night.

Mike was well satisfied at the way she took things.

"She ain't dropped and won't," he said to himself. "Yer bet dat, instead uv sunshine, she would be a thunder cloud if she knew uv our racket."

Poor Mike.

Hadn't she dropped?

You can just bet that she had, as our readers are already aware.

About the same time Muldoon went into his wife's room.

"Did ye hear the news?" he asked.

"What?" she questioned.

"It wur very suddent."

"What wur?"

"The death."

"Av who?"

"McManus McGill."

"Who's he?"

"Ye niver heard me speake av him?"

"No."

"That is a wondher. He wur me dearest friend."

"Sthrange that I niver knew him. He wur niver here?"

"Who?"

"Sthrange yet whin he wur yez dearest friend, and I have known ye to fetch men here who wur no the friends av yez at all, and ax them to stay till they got toired and offen to sind for their thrunks."

"Oh, McManus niver went out in society."

"Why?"

"He had a good rayson. His leg wur shot off during the war. Yis, he's gone; died av pleurisy av the thorax. I will be gone all day to-morrow."

"Where?"

"To his funeral. Dust me black kid gloves and lay him out upon the bureau so that they will be ready for me when I awake."

"I will. Do ye want me, too, along?"

"Ye?"

"Yis."

"Bedalia, are ye woild? Have ye no sinse?"

"Why?"

"The idea av ye viewing a corpse wid no legs."

"Thru," said Mrs. Muldoon, as she turned away.

To herself she muttered:

"Oh, ye ould liar! The idea av ye thrying to fool me wid yez funeral steers. McManus McGill is a myth, fur a man wid any such appellation wud be born dead."

Muldoon was also muttering:

Cheerfully.

"She swallowed it whole," he grinned. "Faix it wur a stroke av gaynius fur me to mention the kid gloves. I'll take him and throw him down the sewer just as soon as I git out of the house."

Right after breakfast, at which the ladies were not present, Muldoon and the Hon. Mr. Growler sauntered out of the house.

Their wives were watching them from the half-shut blinds of an upper-story window.

"Luk at the two daisies," criticized Mrs. Muldoon; "see me ould warrier. He luks loike going to a funeral, don't he, wid a lemon-colored necktie, and a plum-colored vest wid gilt buttons on."

"And whatever stocks are, I don't think the business in them requires Mikey to don green gloves, and put a bouquet in his button-hole. See how he has got his mustache waxed."

"Biddy, dear?"

"Well, Mary Ann?"

"Do you suppose it will be a stag?"

"No."

"Would Mikey have waxed his mustache if it was to be?"

"Not much. Would Muldoon wear a lemon-colored necktie?"

"No."

"Oh, the villains!"

"The deceivers!"

"The rascals!"

"But we'll fix them."

"You bet."

Totally unaware of this conversation, which boded no good to them, Mike and Muldoon pursued their way towards the livery stable, where they were to get a coach and go to the grove.

They were in the best of spirits.

The orthodox birds sang in their hearts and all things appeared to be lovely.

"We've got an elegant day," said Muldoon.

"Cheesey," corroborated Mike.

"We couldn't have had a better."

"Nixey."

"And how nice we fooled the old crows."

"Splendid."

Thus conversing they went along till the livery stable was reached.

Then a carriage was ordered.

It was an imposing vehicle, and it had four horses with plumes at their heads to draw it.

Lighting their cigars, the pair got into it.

The driver cracked his whip and off went the vehicle. Muldoon's picnic had fairly begun.

The grove was arrived at after a drive of about two hours and a half.

Although rather early, Mr. McNulty, who owned the grove, had things already prepared.

Bunting decorated the trees; a huge sign of "welcome" was suspended over the gate, while swinging between two of the biggest trees was a banner bearing the inscription:

"MULDOON FOREVER!"

Mr. McNulty came forward.

"How do ye like it?" he asked.

"The decorations?" asked Muldoon.

"Yes." "The decorations are well worth looking at."

"Rale foine."

"Glad to hear it. Ye are the fust wans here yet."

"Have the ateables come?"

"Yis."

"And the beer?"

"Not yit."

Muldoon's face fell.

"I hope to St. Patrick that they won't forget the beer," he said. "Begob, a picnic widout beer wud be loike a cipon av seltzer widout the gas."

"Ye are worrying too soon," remarked Mike.

"Why?"

"Look up der road."

"What for?"

"Here comes the German water now."

Sure enough, a big brewery wagon laden with a pyramid of beer kegs came rolling down the street.

Upon the summit of the pyramid was Mr. Henry Huggs.

There he sat, bolt upright, as rigid as a fence paling. He looked about as much out of place as a death head would on a breakfast table.

The Hon. Mr. Growler made a gesture of the utmost disgust.

"Muldoon," he said.

"Yes."

"I'm thirsty."

"Ye are?"

"Yes, thirsty as an old clam dat has been bricked up by accedent in der side uv a house fer nineteen years. But I wouldn't drink dat beer fer der hull brewery."

"Why not?"

"Look at der thing on top uv der highest keg. He's enuff fer ter spoil der hull wagon load."

As Mike spoke the wagon arrived at where they were. Mr. Huggs descended from his lofty elevation in sections. Presently he got safely upon the ground.

He saluted Muldoon.

"The beer has harrived," he declared.

"How many kegs?" queried Muldoon.

"Heighty."

"Think that eighty kegs are enough?"

Mike reflectively gnawed at his mustache.

"I'll be durned if I don't think dat it would have been better ter get eighty-one," he said.

While Muldoon was pondering over this brilliant suggestion, the noise of martial music was heard.

It grew nearer.

Presently it was seen that it proceeded from a big stage drawn by ten horses.

Upon the stage's sides, on canvas covering, was the legend:

"THE SCHMITT ASSOCIATION."

The ten horses cavorted into the grove.

The stage followed.

After considerable dancing and prancing the ten horses came to a stand still—the stage likewise.

The first to get out was Mr. Schmitt.

He waddled up and grabbed Muldoon effusively.

"How you vos?" he said. "I vos got your invitation, und as you vos say, und frendts, I bring all der association. Dey vos all nice, quiet young vellers—we only had to gall der bolice three dimes goming up here."

The association got out of the stage.

They looked a nice, quiet crowd.

Loaferish young fellows, with blue shirts and white caps, and hang-dog countenances.

The first thing that they did was to pull down a keg of beer from the wagon and tap it.

Mr. Schmitt appeared delighted.

He slapped Muldoon upon the shoulder.

"Don't I vos told you," he said, "dey vos der most

sociable set of young fellers dot efer you meets mit? Nod-dings sdock ub apout dem. Look at dem now. Dey vos dapping another kaig."

## CHAPTER IX.

MULDOON did not look quite so pleased as did Mr. Schmitt.

"Mike!" he whispered.

"Wot?"

"You wur whrong."

"Bout wot?"

"Getting eighty-wan kegs av beer."

"How?"

"We will nade at least wan hundred and eighty-wan for this crowd."

"And take me fer a flny old shark wid ear-rings in its ears if dat would be a marker!" stated the Honorable Mike, philosophically.

Now more music burst forth.

"Sogers!" yelled one of the Schmitt Association.

All rushed to the grove entrance.

There, advancing in glittering array, was a band of warriors in red shirts and black caps, their muskets gleaming in the sun.

A banner borne in their midst bore this motto:

"THE RAFFERTY MUSKETEERS,

T. O'DONNELL RAFFERTY, CAPTAIN,

1107 1/2 West 14th Street, New York.

All Coffins Marked Down Next Week."

Muldoon gasped.

"It is Rafferty!" he said.

"And friends," dryly put in Mr. Growler.

The procession marched into the grove.

Behind the musketeers was a carriage, from which Rafferty himself alighted.

"Oh, Muldoon, ye ould devil," he said, "ye see that I could not kape away from yez picnic. I thought ye wanted all that ye could get to come, so I brought my musketeers. Great idea av moine, those musketeers. Every gun-carrier av them is pledged to buy their coffins av me only."

The musketeers stacked their guns and assailed the beer wagon.

Down came six more kegs.

"They make themselves at home, yez see," said Rafferty. "Gentlemen's sons, every man."

While Muldoon was looking ruefully at the gulping down of the beer, a third party came in.

A well-known figure headed it.

The figure was that of Hippocrates Burns.

If possible, he looked shabbier than ever.

He wore a cardigan jacket.

Soiled white pants.

A high-hat.

One boot.

And a carpet slipper.

But his high hat was perched jauntily upon ear, and he waved what had once been a cane with a Chesterfieldian grace.

Behind him was about as motley a lot of bums, tramps,

saloon stove-guarders, keg-drainers and played out old rounders as ever was collected.

"Should old acquaintance be forgot?  
And never brought to sight?"

he chirped as he advanced to Muldoon. "You have sent for me and I have come. I have also brought some of my friends. Allow me to introduce them. Major Stuyvesant."

A dilapidated old scarecrow stepped forth.

"Judge De Lacy."

Out from the ranks appeared a work-house wreck.

"Senator Smith."

A skeleton from an ash barrel appeared.

"Allow me, judge, major and senator, to introduce you to my dear friend, Mr. Muldoon."

The three advanced.

Simultaneously:

Evidently with the idea of grasping Muldoon's hand.

Muldoon recoiled.

"I will wait till later, Hippocrates," he said, "then I will make the acquaintance av yez friends in a body."

Hippocrates' acquaintances did not seem much offended.

The whole horde made a blind rush for the beer wagon, and the kegs came down off it like lightning.

Muldoon wished that he was anywhere else.

"Mike," he sighed.

"Wot?"

"Bhring me ice."

"Wot for?"

"To put on me head."

"What ails ye?"

"Luk at me guests and ask, do ye? The last arrival wud disgrace a foive-cint lodging-house."

But all of his guests had not yet arrived.

More were to come.

The sound of singing was wasted to his ears upon the breeze.

"Oh, come and be saved,

"Oh, come and be saved,

Sinners leave your wicked ways

And join the angel band.

"Oh, come and be saved,

"Oh, come and be saved;

Fly to the ranks of the righteous ones

And with the redeemed stand."

Muldoon looked up.

"What is it, a thaveling revival?" he asked.

Again, nearer to them came the singing.

"Why will you wait,  
Pausing at the gate?

Don't be too late,

Come to glory straight,

Come, sinner, come."

Mike had meantime been looking out through an interstice in the trees.

"I'll be gol darned!" exclaimed he.

"About what?"

"Yer can't guess?"

"It's a new present for yer."

"What kind?"

"It's der Rev. Mr. Sneakaby Snuggs wid about fourteen hundred and ten wimmien."

In verification of Mr. Growler's words, into the grove marched a cohort of ladies.

The Rev. Sneakaby Snuggs was at their head.

As he waved his umbrella the ladies sang in the most nasal discordance:

"Rejoice and be glad  
It is sunshine at last!  
The night has departed.  
The shadows are past!"

Sneakaby caught sight of the Hon. Mike first.

"Dear brother!" he cried, "how are you? How is Mr. Muldoon?"

"Oh, I'm as crispy as a new-made ginger-snap," Mike responded; "as fer Muldoon, dere's der old plum himself. Ask him how the torpidity of his liver is."

Mr. Snuggs braced Muldoon and said,

"How pleased I am to behold you!" he cried. "Verily, the Lord giveth good looks to those that he loves. I received your welcome invitation and I took advantage of it. I have with me the widows' praying band of the fold of which I, oh—am blessed to be the shepherd of."

Anybody could tell that the praying band was composed of widows.

They bore trade-marks of that fact in their personal appearance; the rusty, dingy black garb and the moulting weeds of mourning.

They were handsome.

Very.

About as pretty as a collection of Japanese idols in some old curiosity shop.

Muldoon and Mike were at once besieged by them.

They clustered around our two heroes like flies about a sugar-bowl.

Mike felt uncomfortable.

Especially when our withered old picture frames asked if he belonged to the church, and received as an answer that all this belonged to was "Sweep-em-aside Hose, No. 4" of Deadwood City; then, she wanted them to go down upon his knees and pray with her.

Muldoon was quite the contrary.

He felt flattered.

He acknowledged the introduction to them of about thirty of the widows by Mr. Snuggs.

One widow attracted them.

She was the best looking of the collection.

She was plump.

She was red-haired.

And she had a real nice dimple on each cheek.

Besides her feet were not so very large and her hands were quite passable, facts in regard to which members could not well be alleged of the other widows.

At last she got Muldoon all to herself.

"Suppose we take a walk?" she hinted.

Muldoon was willing.

He offered her his arm.

She accepted.

Just as they were going off, Mr. McNulty appeared. Muldoon excused himself, which excuse the widow most charmingly accepted and stood aloof.

He did not look at all peaceable, did Mr. McNulty.

Rather the reverse.

"See here, Muldoon," he uttered.

"Well?"

"This is a rayspectable grove av moine."

"Who said it wur not?"

"But what did ye tell me when he hoired it?"

"What did I?"

"Ye said ye wanted it for a picnic."

"Didn't I?"

"Ye said it would be a quiet affair."

"Ain't it?"

"Ain't it?" Mr. McNulty repeated the words in tones of scorn, "it is quiet, very. Bedad, those young devils wid all colored shirts and caps are doing more damage in wan minute thin I can mind in wan day. Shure, they are up the Atlantic threes now lukking for chistnuts."

Muldoon waved him away.

"I'll pay for whatever they do damages," he said.

That mollified Mr. McNulty.

"Begob, they can dig up the threes by the roots now, if they wish," he declared, as he walked off.

Muldoon was particularly fascinated with the widow.

She was buxom and well built, and there was a sort of fascinating sorrow about her.

Sorrow sometimes, you know, is fascinating.

Particularly when in the form of widow's weeds.

So at least Muldoon thought.

After being introduced to her by the Rev. Sneakaby he sort of, to use the phrase, "hung around," which probably resulted in her invitation for a stroll. His devotion she had noticed.

And she seemed, after a fashion, to reciprocate it!

Certain it was that she smiled upon him, and Muldoon felt flattered.

He spoke to the Honorable Mike, who looked like a human type of misery. He had just been introduced to the forty-third widow.

"Mike!" said Muldoon.

"Wot?" gruffly said the other.

"Me idea? wra a foineawan."

"Wot idea?"

"About the picnic."

"Wot uv it?"

"The stag elimint. Luk at that beautiful craythure wid the rosy ringlets. Wan glance suffices ye to show that it is irretrievably in love wid me that she is. Watch me!"

"What for?"

"Till ye see in what a short toime I conquer her affections. It is a coquette av the very first milk and wather am I."

Muldoon sidled up to the widow who was patiently waiting for McNulty's exit.

"It is a beautiful day, Mrs. Gibbs," he insinuated. Gibbs being the name of the fair creature.

Mrs. Gibbs acquiesced.

"Lovely," said she.

"How foine the hue on the autumn leaves is."

"Yes, sir."

"It is foine about here."

"Yes, sir."

"But foiner farther, Mrs. Gibbs."

"Well?"

"Wud ye loike to take the sthroll ye spoke av before the festivities av the day begins?"

Mrs. Gibbs having at first proposed the pedestrian expedition now with all of a woman's fickleness decided to demur.

"People might talk," said she.

"About what?" questioned Muldoon.

"Well, you know," coyly said the widow, in response, "I, of course am a widow and you are a bachelor."

Muldoon's face became illuminated with a grin.

"She knows me not," muttered he, then aloud he said: "Niver moind, Mrs. Gibbs, we will take a sthroll."

She acquiesced.

Muldoon's arm was accepted.

Off went the pair.

The Hon. Mike looked after them.

Something akin to envy disturbed his bosom.

"Wot a pair uv placques dey wud make ter put onter a wall," he reflectively remarked, as he gazed after their retreating figures; "dat is, I mean if dey'd stick on der wall."

Mike gazed around.

A lone widow with hair the color of a dog day sunset, was pensively surveying the efforts of the Rafferty Musketeers to demolish the pyramid of beer kegs upon the brewer's wagon.

"She ain't fust-class," decided Mike, "nuther does she come in the steerage. Intermediate is about her size. Ordinairely, I'd jist as leave sizzle around wid a curiosity outer some museum as her, but yer kin bet a McClelland saddle wid a hatchway in der middle 'ginst a dog cart, dat I don't let dat old stuff uv a Muldoon get ahead uv me. Smooth me down fer a two days old pup wid cemented eyes and no visible chain, if I can't get a widder and add gloom over der picnic as well as Muldoon."

Therefore did the Hon. Michael Growler approach the widow whose hair was of a dog-day sunset hue, he having been previously introduced to her by Snuggs.

"Bully weather," mildly said Mike.

The widow assented.

Pensively she replied that the weather was indeed charming.

"I wish it was not," she uttered as she pumped a solitary tear into her eye.

Mike was amazed.

"Why not?" he asked.

"Because."

"Because what?"

Instead of one tear, half a dozen suffused the widow's eyes.

"Mr. Growler," she said, "this reminds me so forcibly of old times. It was just a day like this when—when—"

"What?" interrupted the Hon. Mike.

"That Donald and I."

"What Donald?"

"My first husband. It was a day just like this that Donald and I were walking out together when he asked me

to become his. Poor Donald, he was a good man, and the second time that he had the same idea."

Donald's relict was so afflited over the loss of her husband that it needed Mike's ready arm to console her.

He tried to console her all the way.

"S'pose dat we wends our wifes to the grave," she said. "Mebbe dat der activity uv the world will assuage yer grief."

This was a long speech for the senator.

He finished it, though, and appeared to be in high spirits at its successful termination.

His arm having been accepted, the two moved off in the wake of Muldoon and his widow.

Mike's conscience, however, pricked him.

Talk as he might, as he was pretty free with his mouth, Mike cared a good deal for his wife.

"Oh, wot a guffing I would get if Mary Ann wuz here," he mentally ejaculated.

Little did he know that Mary Ann was there.

Also Mrs. Muldoon.

Now to retrospect a little.

Our readers are aware that both Mrs. Muldoon and Mrs. Growler had witnessed the departure of their liege lords from the half-closed blinds of their windows.

They knew full well where they were bound, for Mrs. Muldoon had heard the locality of the picnic from her eaves dropping at the parlor door.

And it was not many minutes before the two ladies, deeply veiled, were following in their husbands' tracks.

Arriving at the grove one of the first figures that they beheld was Mr. Henry Hugg.

He had got tired of his espionage of the beer barrels and strolled towards the entrance of the grove to puff at a cigar.

At first he did not recognize the two veiled ladies. He thought that they were splinters from a Praying Band.

Much to his surprise one of them accosted him.

It was Mrs. Muldoon.

She touched him upon the shoulder.

Mr. Hugg's cigar fell out of his mouth in his amazement.

He, be it known, had never been a furious favorite with the fair sex.

No wonder.

A stone was just about as capable as exciting tender emotions in the female bosom as he.

Hence, some of his surprise.

"Can hit be possible," he soliloquized. "that Hi 'ave struck a crush!"

Speedily he was deceived of that hallucination.

"Henry," uttered a voice.

He started visibly.

He knew the voice well.

"The missus!" he gasped.

"Yes," went on the voice, "it is me. Kape still, for if ye quiver it will be the worst for ye, Henry."

"Well?" replied the English lackey.

"Where is he?"

"Who?"

"That carroty-crowned ould dummy av moine."

"Mr. Muldoon?"

master away.  
You will find 'im somewhere  
grew disdainful.

"All where the ould devil is," she said.  
"He is wid wan av petticoats; he is wid wan av thim,  
Ah, Mary Ann, it's think av the toime-  
To tell us that it wur a stag party!"

Mrs. Growler put in her vocal bar.  
"Henry," she asked, "where is Mikey? Tell me—no equivocation."

An ominous gleam in Mrs. Growler's eyes, and a peremptory stamp of her somewhat substantial foot warned Mr. Huggs that she meant business.

He had seen the two couples, Muldoon and Mike and the widows, strolling off.

Indeed, he could see them yet.

He concluded to play tell tale.

He did it mutely, though.

He just pointed at the quartette.

That was sufficient.

"The ould dayceiver!" exclaimed Mrs. Muldoon.

"The lying decoyer!" cried Mrs. Growler.

With which favorable synopsis of their husbands' characters and moral worth, the two started on a run after their truant husbands.

Mr. Huggs looked after them.

Mr. Huggs' face did not assume an expression of untroubled quietude.

Rather did it appear troubled; decidedly troubled.

"Hit his my hidea," he groaned, as he picked up his cigar and mournfully tried to draw up a light which did not exist, "hit his my hidea that Hi 'ave put my foot hin hit. Hi will catch 'Eavenly blessings which never way the blooming racket hends. But won't the mawster get it! 'Eavens!"

Meanwhile Muldoon and Mike were towing along their fair charges without the faintest anticipation of the storm which was soon to burst upon their heads.

Muldoon was in the lead.

With the fair Gibbs upon his arm.

He was feeding her on all sorts of taffy.

"It is funny, Mr. Muldoon," said she.

"What is funuy?" asked he, bestowing upon her a smile calculated to melt the salt off of a pretzel.

"That you have never married."

"There wur raysons."

"What?"

"Wanst I loved."

"You did?"

"Yis."

"Who?"

"A leddy now dead. She wur wan av the fairest av the fair. But death claimed her as his own. She doied av the varaloid astericks—I mean hysterics."

"But could you never love again?"

The question was pointed.

Muldoon discerned its purpose.

"It is laying for a second husband is she," he reflected,

"and it is mesilf that she has marked for the sucker, faix."

"I will humor her."

So he said, with a Romeo air:

"Mrs. Gibbs?"

"Yes."

"Ye have propounded a query to me?"

"Yes."

"Ye asked me wur it possible that I could love again?"

"I did."

"Thin let me say that wid me first love always visible in me moind's eye that I did not belave that I could love for a repetithion, but—"

"But what?"

"Me ideas have changed."

"Since when?"

As the lady spoke she favored Muldoon with a soft and captivating glance.

He could make but one reply.

"Since I saw ye!" he ejaculated.

At this moment there was a sudden onslaught upon him.

The onslaught was in the single number, feminine gender.

And Mrs. Muldoon comprised it.

With lightning-like celerity she fractured Muldoon's high hat with a blow of her umbrella.

"Ye apology fur a man," she remarked, in high C; "this shows what thrust I can put into ye. This is the way that ye go to a funeral, is it, wid a lah-de-dah-dar an' a girl upon yez arm?"

Mrs. Gibbs fired up.

Although taken by surprise and knowing not who the speaker was, she did not mean to be called a lah-de-dar girl by anybody.

She assumed the majestic.

"Woman," said she, "what do you mean?"

Mrs. Muldoon at this query forgot all of her later social culture since the time that she had removed to Fifth avenue.

"Do ye know who ye are spaking to, ye brazen-faced hussy?" she asked.

Mrs. Gibbs was equal to her.

"Not much," said she.

This answer was but adding fuel to the flames.

Squarely, with her hands upon her hips, did Mrs. Muldoon confront her.

"Ye call me not much," said she, "but ye will foind out that I am much—much too much fur ye. The sugar-candy dummy that ye are thravelin' wid is me husband, and I will lather the loife out av any wan who says different!"

This put a new aspect upon affairs.

There was a tone of sincerity about Mrs. Muldoon's utterances which carried conviction to Mrs. Gibbs' soul.

She concluded it would be better to fade.

She did.

She disengaged herself from Muldoon's arm and faded away through the trees.

Muldoon was left alone.

With his wife.

Rather in all probability would he have been left alone with a hyena.

At least so it seemed, for he darted away like a flash.

Mrs. Muldoon hesitated at first whether to follow him or not.

Her impulse was to go after her husband and scalp him.

Second thoughts, which are said to be the best, caused her to look around for Mary Ann.

That fair female was alone.

She looked just about as merry as Mrs. Muldoon.

Mrs. Muldoon advanced to her.

"Have ye found Mike?" she asked.

Mrs. Growler's fingers clutched.

"I did," she said, "but only for a minute. If I could have got hold of him before he ran I would have marred him for life. Oh, that creature!"

"Did Mike have a girl?"

"He did."

"Where is she?"

A smile of satisfaction came to Mrs. Growler's countenance.

"I think that she is on her way to the hospital," replied she. "I got a couple of good blows in on the hussy."

"I wish that I could have got hold av the lemon-faced fairy that wor wid me ould chromo," said Mrs. Muldoon, "it is on her way not to the hospital but it's a morgue wud she be."

While the two ladies were discussing their mutual wrongs the Rev. Mr. Sneakaby Snuggs, who had momentarily left his flock, came along.

Mr. Snuggs was a fervent admirer of the fair sex, and the fact that he had imbibed several glasses of beer helped to render him more than usually admiring.

He beheld Mrs. Muldoon.

"Verily, the damsel is not young, but she still is solid," muttered he. "I will see if I cannot make an impression."

Accordingly Mr. Snuggs paused in his walk.

He assumed a most killing attitude, one calculated to break up on sight, against a tree.

Fondly did he beam upon Mrs. Muldoon.

She was unconscious of her admirer till Mary Ann touched her shoulder.

"Good Gracious, Bridget!" said she.

"What?"

"Look at it."

"Look at what?"

"The man against that tree. I really believe he is trying to mash you."

Mrs. Muldoon looked.

The Rev. Sneakaby Snuggs was smiling sweetly and waving a handkerchief in her direction.

"Do you suppose the image manes to flirt wid me?" asked Mrs. Muldoon.

She did not need to receive a verbal answer.

Mr. Sneakaby's next action proved it.

He tipped his hat politely and hemmed.

Then he stepped forward and addressed the ladies.

"Pleasant day," said he.

He had made a mistake.

Mrs. Muldoon was not on the flirt.

Rather more on the kill.

She turned on the Rev. Sneakaby.

So ruffled was her demeanor that the smile suddenly left Sneakaby's face, and he retreated a couple of steps.

"Did ye spake to me, ye Japanese puzzle?" she queried.

"I-I."

"Ye did."

"I-I."

"How dare ye?"

"Wh-what?"

"Insult a leddy."

"I did not mean—"

"Get out, ye pulpit-pounder. Oh, if there wur but man here to take me part."

There happened to be.

A figure issued from the bushes. It flew out almost like a jack-in-a-box.

Biff!

Biff!

Biff!

The first blow took the Rev. Mr. Snuggs beneath the ear and staggered him.

The second caught him upon the nose and caused the claret to flow copiously.

The third made its arrival under his chin, lifted him up a few inches and then sent him sprawling at full length upon the grass.

Having thus disposed of Mr. Sneakaby, his aggressor proceeded to kick him with hearty vigor.

Mrs. Muldoon uttered an ejaculation as she looked at the individual who had come to her relief.

"Howly Moses!" she cried, "it is Terry!"

Sure enough it was Terry.

Terry Muldoon himself.

When he fled from his wife he had only gone a little ways, just far enough to get out of unpleasantness. Then he had slyly kept a watch upon her movements.

He had seen the Rev. Sneakaby's attempted mash.

He heard his wife's exclamation.

And it occurred to him that it would be a brilliant idea and make him solid with the old lady if he would rush out and play the part of the heroic rescuer in the drama of "Virtue in Distress."

He continued kicking the Rev. Mr. Sneakaby, while that light of ministerial profession yelled with pain.

"Oh, vessel of wrath, pause!" he beseeched.

"Not till I wear out me boot toes," answered Muldoon, "and there is a bulwark av brass behoind the leather."

The Rev. Sneakaby Snuggs recognized the voice.

As he crawled out of the dust into which he had been thrown he exclaimed:

"Of a verity it is Mr. Muldoon!"

"Ye bet that it is," emphatically replied Muldoon, "thry to stroik up a picnic acquaintance wid me woife will ye? Take that!"

Another kick descended upon the prostrate one.

He tried to explain.

"Mr. Muldoon," said he, "I—I—"

"That will do," sternly said Muldoon, "now off wid ye."

Like a whipped cur Sneakaby faded.

Muldoon smilingly looked at his wife.

"It is lucky that ye are blest wid a husband that is able to protect ye," said he.

Mr. Muldoon, though, did not prove remarkably grateful for her so termed luck.

She grabbed Muldoon by the ear.

"Come home!" she cried.

Just then Mary Ann made a sudden dive into a clump of bushes.

From out of it she fetched the Hon. Mike, who looked a veritable "crushed" lily of Nevada.

"You come home, too," she said, and Mike, with a dismal glance at Muldoon, who answered it with one equally sad, obeyed.

\* \* \* \* \*

That busted up the picnic.

As far as Muldoon and Mike were concerned.

But now for the rest.

They had lots of fun.

The Rafferty Musketeers and the Schmitt Association got into a general wrangle, and blood flowed freely. Hippocrates Burns and his friends became involved in the muss which arose, as might have been expected, over the division of the beer, and Hippocrates was carried off to the hospital upon a stretcher.

Somehow another quarrel occurred between the Rev.

Sneakaby Snuggs and Mr. Henery Huggs about the latter's attention to one of the widows, upon whom Snuggs was disposed to regard as a particularly favored flower of the praying band.

From words they came to blows. Sneakaby's one licking from Muldoon had not appeared to fully satisfy him.

Mr. Sneakaby was most Sullivanly knocked out.

Amidst the groans and piteous outcries of the widows he was borne home, followed by his female companions.

Mr. McNulty sent for the police.

Half of the Rafferty Musketeers, including Mr. Rafferty, and three quarters of the Schmitt Association, embracing Mr. Schmitt, spent their night in dungeon cells.

When Muldoon read the account of his picnic, which was termed a disgraceful orgie by the papers the next morning, he groaned.

He turned to the Hon. Mike.

"Mike," said he.

"Wot?" grunted Mike.

"There is only wan man that I asked to me picnic that I will henceforth luk upon in the loight av a friend. It is Edward Geoghan."

"Why?"

"Bekase he didn't come."

[THE END.]

TOM TEASER, the author of this story, is also the author of the following stories published in THE WIDE AWAKE LIBRARY: No. 971, "Muldoon's Base Ball Club in Philadelphia." No. 967, "Muldoon Abroad." No. 963, "Muldoon's Base Ball Club in Boston." No. 959, "Muldoon's Base Ball Club." No. 943, "Next Door; or, The Irish Twins." No. 947, "The Aldermen Sweeneys of New York." No. 933, "Senator Muldoon." No. 931, "Muldoon Out West."

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